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July 1, 2020

Hawai‘i Board of Education Members

Dear BOE Members,

With over 1,000 members statewide, Parents for Public Schools of Hawai‘i (PPS Hawai‘i) is a non-profit organization focused on supporting and improving public education through family engagement. Our group emerged from the Furlough Friday crisis in 2009, and since that time, we have been engaged in advocacy and service for families in the public schools. We view public schools as fundamental to the well-being of our children and families, but also to our democratic way of life. Please see our website for more information on our organization: https://ppshi.org/

I am writing in regard to our State's receipt of federal relief funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. We ask that CARES Act and additional relief funds for schools and students be allocated equitably to address the unique learning needs of students from marginalized communities.

We further request that a plan for the proposed use of these funds be made available to the general public and that you create opportunities for students, families, and advocates to have meaningful input into the plan for how these funds shall be distributed and used. Finally, we ask that the Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE) create working groups or task forces to assist in addressing the particular funding needs of the special populations mentioned herein. PPS Hawai‘i would welcome the opportunity to participate in such an endeavor.

As you consider how funds are spent out of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, we make the following recommendations below to aid you in ensuring educational equity, particularly in your consideration of Part C of the Certification and Agreement for Funding out of the Governor's Emergency Relief Fund. Specifically, the recommendations relate to remote instruction for students with the greatest needs (Part C1a), students with disabilities, students from low-income families (Part C1b), English Learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and students in foster care (Part C2a). These recommendations also may inform the DOE as they consider Part D4 of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Certification and Agreement for Funding application, which requires an explanation for how local education agencies will provide services that permit students, teachers and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers, including those based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability and age, that impede equal access to, or participation in, the program.

Recommendations

Target Funds Equitably. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many educational inequities long felt by students of color, English learners, students from families with limited incomes, immigrant students, and students experiencing

homelessness, among others. Emergency relief funds should be targeted to meet the needs of the student groups most impacted by the inequities that are being amplified by the pandemic. COVID-19 emergency policies and relief funds should be used to:

- Provide the equipment, connectivity services, and technical training that students and families need to engage in at-home learning, especially in rural communities with more limited access to the Internet.
- Ensure compensatory and remedial education services for students to mitigate the impact of school closures on academic success.
- Provide resources and support for English language learners and their families, including progress assessments, translated materials and access to multiple modes of learning.
- Increase resources for community colleges that may not receive the funds they need due to the funding formulae in the CARES Act.
- Increase funding for programs in the Every Student Succeeds Act and other federal education laws that were created to address inequities and meet the educational needs of multilingual learners, students of color, students from families with limited incomes, and others with special needs.
- Limit requests for waivers of federal law to those that are absolutely necessary to address the immediate needs of the people of the State and ensure those waivers do not harm students and families.

Connect Students and Families to Supports and Services. Local education agencies and institutions of higher Education meet many of the life needs of students and families, including through mental health supports, nutritional services and childcare services. COVID-19 emergency policies and relief funds should be used to:

- Increase access to counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals and reliable telemedicine services that can provide critical care and service referrals to students, families, and educators.
- Provide food and healthcare to students and families, through direct payments, nutritional support programs like the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program, meal services and transportation supports.

Ensure Accountability and Transparency. Recipients of emergency funds must be held to accountability and transparency standards, even as they are given some flexibility to spend funds quickly to meet the needs of their communities. Accountability and transparency measures should include requirements that you and the DOE distribute funds equitably and use emergency funds to supplement, not supplant, State school funds. Recipients should detail distribution criteria, use of funds, and transparency and accounting measures. This is a critical part of mitigating COVID-related economic downturn will likely have on school funding systems.

Foster Family Connections to Schools. Schools should always work to ensure deep and meaningful engagement with families. That engagement is now more important than ever, especially as education agencies identify ways to address extended lost learning time. Schools must be able to communicate with students and families, even as they comply with social distancing requirements. COVID-19 emergency policies and relief funds should be used to:

- Support programs to locate and communicate with students and families who have not had contact with their schools since closures began.
- Fund student and family support liaisons who are solely tasked with assuring that student and family well checks, surveying family needs, and sharing critical policy and practice updates with families.

Plan for the Next School Year. Looking toward the opening of the 2020-21 school year, COVID-19 emergency policies and relief funds should be used to:

- Develop non-punitive diagnostic assessment systems and professional development so that teachers can determine the extent of student learning during school closures; and
- Support Statewide planning for educational continuity, including after school and summer learning, compensatory education, and remedial education plans, especially for students of color, English learners, students from families with limited incomes, immigrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and students in the juvenile justice and foster care systems.

Again, thank you for your consideration and the work you are doing to address the COVID-19 crisis and its effects on education in our State. We at PPS Hawai‘i are available to support your efforts to support students, families and schools during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. We are currently collaborating with the DOE Community Engagement Office to provide our parent engagement program online. We hope that you will call on us to continue to work to support families in our State during these difficult times.

Sincerely,



Lois A. Yamauchi, PhD
President
Parents for Public Schools of Hawai‘i

Parents for Public Schools Hawaii (PPSHI) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization of parents, community members, and educators working to improve and support public education through family engagement. We are committed to ensuring all children in Hawai`i have access to a quality public education.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

School reopening

Daniel Bostaph <daniel.bostaph@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

My name is Daniel Bostaph and I am a teacher over on Kauai.

Our union has requested that we email you regarding the spacing between desks for the reopening of schools.

I am in complete agreement with which you designate three feet between desks. The union does not stand for all of our varying beliefs.

The HSTA president assumes we will shut down again but there seems to be no indication for this as cases have increased in recent weeks and restrictions are still being lifted. So please keep moving forward with reopening of the schools as it would be more detrimental to students of all ages to go back to online learning.

Again please keep moving forward and do not give in to the preposterous demands of the union. They fail to see that it is impossible to implement what they demand.

Mahalo

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Karli DeRego <karlideregо@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To who it may concern:

Hello,

My name is Karli DeRego and I am sending in a testimony to state how ethically wrong it is to risk the lives of teachers by asking them to distance themselves from others at only 3 feet. Not only does this put your employees at risk, but also those who you hope to serve--students or the future generations. With COVID-19 cases beginning to spike around the U.S., it is disgusting to expect teachers to only stand 3 feet apart when most other occupations are required to be 6 feet apart. How can you, the BOE, treat your employees as expendable? The CDC and state governments expect 6 feet apart in literally every other setting, so why not in a classroom? As a former teacher of undergraduates, I expect the BOE to require strict standards in school settings during a pandemic, which means requiring social distancing of 6 feet apart AND hazard pay. I look forward to hearing of a 6 feet apart social distancing requirement and guaranteed hazard pay for BOE employees in public schools.

Mahalo for your time.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY - Presentation on Dept. of Edu's Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for SY20-21

Jocelyn Pajimula <jocelyn.olegario@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:33 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Hawai‘i Board of Education,

My name is Jocelyn Pajimula and I am a current teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School in Ewa Beach, HI. In regards to the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 20-21 School Year I would like to submit testimony.

I demand the standardization of spacing between students in the classroom be changed from 3 feet to 6 feet. I will not put myself, my students and our families at risk of the spread of COViD-19.

Thank you for your time,
Jocelyn Pajimula
Ewa Makai Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

2020-21 School year and social distancing

Susan Ryan <susan.ryan@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

The CDC's regulations require 6 feet of distance between members of different households, why would we not expect our students to remain appropriately socially distanced within a classroom setting? Especially when there is no requirement for face masks to be worn by students, it makes no sense to not follow the regulations set up by the scientists who direct us in these health decisions. Many parents and teachers are re-thinking this next school year. One parent told me they feel they would rather their children miss a year of school than die unnecessarily (or more likely spread the disease) through poorly managed and unsafe public education.

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Schools reopening

Skintwin1 <skintwin1@aol.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
For the safety of the students and teachers, please require that there is a six foot distance between each student in every classroom. Most classrooms do not have air conditioning and they are already a health hazard in hot weather and with only a three foot distance between students will only bring about more problems. Please mandate a six foot distance among students and teachers in every classroom.
Thank you,
Diane Styles

Sent from my iPad

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Safer Working Conditions

Brittany Nakawatase <britnaka@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:44 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

We need safer working conditions for teachers and students!!! 3 feet apart in a classroom is not safe!!!!

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social distancing and masks!

K. Janicki <katherinejanicki@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:47 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I implore you to think about the health + safety of teachers just a bit more than the DOE and DOH did. Stating today that kids may sit in a 3ft social distancing front-facing desk configuration, and that wearing masks in class is not required by students is disgusting, contradictive of the current CDC reccomendations and downright shameful. Please show you care about teachers + staff, instead of viewing them as sacrificial lambs, and enforce the true CDC recommendations.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Proper Social Distancing

RD Luster <letslearn023@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:47 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE Members,
I am writing this with much concern. I have been teaching for many years and my students mean the world to me. I do not feel that it would be Healthy or Safe for us to be allowed a 3 foot social distancing policy. The CDC recommends that people keep a 6 foot distance, why would it be okay for students/teachers to only have to have 3 feet of distancing? I am extremely worried for all of us and I would not feel comfortable social distancing only 3 feet. Please change this to a mandatory 6 feet. This would help to lessen our worries during this very difficult time.
Thank you,
Sincerely,
A Dedicated Teacher

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

REVISE health and safety policies

Amy Suzuki <amyclbustamante@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
I am writing in regards to the announcement for opening public schools that was made today. I am an elementary special education teacher and a parent of 2 school aged children.

The thought of schools allowing 3 feet distancing when the current health recommendation is 6 feet distancing is appalling. Then, to add that the BOE will not stand firm on facial coverings (either mask or shield) but only "suggest strongly" or use wording such as "should" is completely disgraceful. You are deliberately putting the entire State of Hawaii at risk by choosing this policy. Yourselves included - if you follow the potential ripple effect this could have.

Yes, children have a lower rate of cases. However, these keiki go home to multi-generational houses. There is no such thing as a "safety bubble" or a "cohort of safety". It is common knowledge that children are amazing carriers for all types of germs and the coronavirus will not be exempt from this. We have already seen over the last couple of weeks how quickly this virus can spread even when we seem to have a "handle" on it.

On the topic of facial coverings: the only way that facial coverings help to reduce the spread of a virus is if EVERYONE is wearing them. It does not protect ME for you to require adults to wear a covering on campus. What are you doing to protect ME as I teach these vulnerable students in the classroom? How will you make ME feel safe?

As a parent, I intended on sending my children to school in a mask. But what are you doing to protect THEM when you say that you will not stand firm on facial coverings? I am doing my part to help protect others by having them cover up. What is being done to protect THEM from others? I am now contemplating other options for education for my students. ME - a PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER - considering other options than the public school system in the State of Hawaii for the sake of health and safety. It should speak **volumes** that your own employee does not trust the systems in place.

Not to mention, it is COMPLETELY backwards to expect students to have bare faces while allowing them to sit within 3 feet of each other - as if they'll never turn their head to talk to a peer. I might have reconsidered this opinion had you assured me that every child will be wearing a mask. It would be understandable to allow students to sit a little closer than the 6 feet recommended distance if EVERY child would have the face mask. Oh, but hold on, put your mask on when you are outside because that is the only time you will assure us that masks will be enforced. OUTSIDE! in the open air! ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!

With these current policies in place, you are sentencing my elder colleagues to death. You are being negligent in your actions and policies and I call on you to make the changes.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Suzuki
DOE Special Education/Elementary School teacher
Parent of DOE Elementary & High School students

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening of schools

Lisa Silva <silva3r3l@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:40 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

- Lisa Silva SPED teacher 4th grade

  Opening of school during Covid19 Pandemic

- Need for safety for students and teachers

  My position on this topic is to make sure we are doing the best we can for safety and welfare of students and staff. Using what research we know to be valid and not putting lives in danger of the unknown. The decisions must be not hasty and need to be completely thought out.

  Thank you

  Lisa Silva

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening Schools for SY 20-21

Thomasina Simmons <thomasinasimmons@rocketmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 2:58 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern:

Schools are a necessary and safe place for students. Students need to be in school.
As the state begins opening up to tourists and reducing some of the safety protocols in place regarding Covid19, parents will need to get back to work.

Unfortunately, opening schools without following the proper guidelines given to us by the CDC and other top health officials is not a good idea. The coronavirus hasn't disappeared. It's still out there. It will continue to be a problem until we have a vaccination.

Please don't open schools up without having custodians and administration understand and follow the clear guidelines to ensure the safest environment for teachers and students.

Thomasina K. Simmons
Coldwell Banker Pacific Properties
Realtor Associate
License No. RS 43262
808-542-5020
thomasinasimmons@rocketmail.com

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 foot space & teacher risk

Dr. Phaedra Robinson <drphaedra@me.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher in the DOE. I have been teaching in the DOE since 1998.
I urge you to mandate that our opening protocols include that ‘student desks will be 6 feet apart at minimum’.
I am a teacher at high risk if I return to the classroom- this will increased my risk of contracting COVID 19 couple with the fact that I am to teach on a military base where families do not all need to quarantine.
I will be forced into taking a leave if you do not protect us. I cannot change my condition that puts me at risk just as I cannot change my age to be at lower risk.
We need to be protected as it is clear the Superintendent does not have our best interests at heart.
Thank you.

With aloha,
Phaedra Elisabeth Robinson, Ph.D.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 Feet apart

Minobe, Russell <russell_minobe@pcel.k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:02 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Russell Minobe and I teach at Pearl City Elementary. I have taught for 24 years. I am now 57 and have been diagnosed with diabetes. This puts me in the "at risk" group. It has been reported that a person is twice as likely to die from COVID19 if they have diabetes.

I am extremely concerned about the social distancing requirements in the classroom. I have watched in horror as our country's COVID19 cases have skyrocketed after reopening due to irresponsible social gathering with no masks and no social distancing. Are we now going to set rules for our children where they are forced to not social distance because their chairs are stationed 3 feet apart? Are we too concerned now with finances that it overrides our common sense? President Trump focuses on the economy and reelection and people are now dying because of it. Will a child and/or teacher have to catch COVID19 and die before action is taken to follow CDC guidelines in the classroom?

Ask yourself, "If this were my child, do I want him/her to be seated 3 feet away from another child in a classroom?" I certainly would not. Extreme situations often require extreme solutions, but have we reached the point where we are willing to sacrifice the health, welfare, and even life of our children as part of the solution.

I hope and pray we have not.

Thank you for your time,
Russell S Minobe

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6-Foot Distancing Importance

Terry Sever <tsever@waiakeawaena.k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:08 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

As a teacher in the Hawaii school system, I implore you to do the right thing by requiring that the 6-foot distancing of students and their desks be reinforced. There is no need to unnecessarily put the health and safety of our children and staff at further risk during this COVID-19 pandemic. We look to you, our leaders, for guidance and support. Please set the example of showing true integrity and actually caring for our education community by following the CDC recommendations. Change the requirement from the current 3-foot mandate to the full 6 feet apart.

Anticipating the resolution,
Mrs. Terry Sever
Waiakeawaena Elementary School Teacher

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Submit testimony

Kalau Hergenrader <kalau.mini@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:10 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

http://boe.hawaii.gov/Pages/Submit-testimony.aspx
Kalaukieleula Hergenrader retired DOE

Re: Trump Coronavirus
DOE must prevent the infection of Coronavirus spread within the Buildings of any DOE School.

Require Masks and Personal shields for all participants. This virus has increased its transmission and is more efficient at infecting crowded spaces.

3 ft is not enough distance for the viability of this virus. Therefore 6 foot distance is required to be minimum spacing to avoid
Transfer of Virus.

There is no good recovery from this virus.The long term consequences are unknown. Our children are most vulnerable to severe autoimmune response to this viral infection.

Medical professionals are uniformed in ppe for protection. What is the most that we can do for the crowded environments of schools? We cannot have the spread of disease in DOE buildings. We cannot have an event of this virus in any school.

Please do the most for keiki and kupuna with whom they live.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jodi Beaty <jbeaty@weis.k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher outraged at the proposed 3 feet distancing rule. How can the BOE go against the CDC guidelines that state:

Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes). https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

Is the BOE more concerned about politics instead of the safety of students, families, and educators? Also, when was the last time a BOE member has been in a classroom? Tell me how five and six-year-olds will only face in one direction for 6 hours a day? As a kindergarten teacher, it is highly improbable. I want my students back in the classroom. I miss them dearly, but I am not willing to risk the safety of my students, their families, my colleagues, and my own family.

I humbly request that the BOE mandates the 6 feet distancing rule.

--
Jodi Beaty, Ph.D.
Kindergarten - Room B11
Waimanalo Elementary & Intermediate School
41-1330 Kalanianaole Highway
Waimanalo, HI 96795
Tel: (808) 259-0460 ext. 279
Fax: (808) 259-0463
http://www.donorschoose.org/jodibeaty

Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate School Administration reserves the right to read/ copy any material that is transmitted through this account. Please use responsibly, and in accordance to the HIDOE & student AUP.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

reopening schools

melissa turner <melissarturner@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Day BOE,

I am an elementary teacher and would like you to reconsider the three feet apart for students. Everywhere we go we must wear a mask and keep six feet apart. Why is that any different for our schools. Students who have asthma are at a greater risk for serious complications from the Coronavirus. We need to put the safety of our children first. Please mandate a six feet apart distance.

Thank You,

Melissa Turner

Gmail **Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>**

Re-opening of schools

Skye Darnell <skye.darnell@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:27 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Skye Darnell.
I teach 7th graders in Kane'ohe at King Intermediate School on O'ahu.
I have taught secondary students for 19 years in our state and also in Japan.

My main concerns regarding the comprehensive plan for the re-opening of schools are mostly aligned with what our union has identified and given justification/reasoning for:
1) The same standard 6' apart guideline required by other departments or private businesses is reasonable to state as the expectation. While some situations may not always enforce this rigidly 100% of the time, we need to be explicit in the plan.
2) Although masks or shields are not proven to be effective on their own, they should be required, rather than encouraged. An individual's failure to comply will surely have natural consequences, but in conjunction with other safety precautions, will contribute positively to reducing the health threat to the general population.
3) I will personally purchase my own digital forehead temperature scanning device to protect myself and my students. It is a fact that people carry the virus asymptomatically and will not be able to visually see which students or other staff pose a risk to myself. It would be reassuring to know that my employer recognized this and felt like they could provide that for each of our precious teachers.

Highly Qualified Teachers are needed for every student in Hawai'i. For many years, I've worked in schools that started the school year without the necessary staff and continuously compromising the quality of our students' education is never a good feeling. We need to heed the caution of our hard working and caring local leaders because we have not seen it at the federal level. Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony on the behalf of myself, my family and my King Intermediate community.

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening of School

kahaholani@aol.com <kahaholani@aol.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:27 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a parent and a teacher, I do not feel that 3ft apart per student is safe for our students or teachers and does not follow the CDC or UH guidelines. We need to do all we can to make sure our classrooms and school campuses are safe and prepared for teaching/learning. Please reconsider the distance between our young individuals as well as our adult individuals. Let's do it right now and prevent a premature shut down of the school system.
Thank you,
Sandra Bode
Teacher and parent

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening schools

Nancy Hilson <nancy.hilson@ewamakai.org> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:31 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,
I'm a 64 year old middle school teacher. I applaud the efforts of all who are trying to get the schools reopened safely. My biggest concern is with masks being optional. I feel this is a huge mistake. Why mandate teachers' wearing of masks and not students'? I also feel we need daily temperature checks for employees and students. This could be done on arrival, with a reasonable amount of devices provided per school. I don't think these two measures are too much to ask. I believe they could have a big impact on the health and safety of students and teachers alike. Outside of these two strategies, I feel it is good to allow schools choice in how they implement their safety strategies/ schedules as each campus and student body is unique.
Thanks for all you do.
Aloha,
Nancy Hilson
Ewa Makai Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Keep Desks 6 Feet Apart

Barbara K Yoshida Potts <bypotts@me.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:32 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hawai‘i Board of Education,

For the safety of Hawai‘i‘s students and teachers please keep student desks 6 feet apart as per CDC guidelines. The guidelines states that virtual learning is the lowest risk and next is…..

Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).

It is absurd to suggest that if desks are facing forward as per the superintendent’s suggestion that 3 feet is enough. Where is the science that supports her claim that 3 feet is enough?

Keep Hawai’i’s student and teachers safe and COVID free.

Sincerely,
Barbara Yoshida Potts
Retired HIDOE Teache

Gmail **Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>**

6 feet

Nikki Takai <nikki.takai@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:32 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I think it must be mandated that student desks should be 6 feet apart. 3 feet apart would be irresponsible and ignorant of the BOE. This would put our students and faculty at risk. This could also put the families of our students and faculty at risk if they bring home COVID-19. If the CDC says that 6 feet social distancing will minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19, then we need to follow those guidelines.

I am someone who falls into the high risk category. With 3 feet distancing, I feel that you are saying that my health is not important or it's ok to compromise my health for education. I also live with my parents who fall into the high risk category. I would not be comfortable going back to work if 3 feet social distancing isn't changed.

PLEASE MANDATE 6 FEET SOCIAL DISTANCING!

I appreciate you reading through my short testimony regarding this matter.

Mahalo,
Nikki Takai

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - We need 6 feet between students and staff, and mandatory MASKS for all!

Sarah Kern <sarah.kern09@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School on Kauai. I am writing to advocate for schools to please follow and enforce the CDC recommendations and the recommendations that our state and counties are putting out in order to protect the safety and well-being of our keiki at school, our staff at school, and all of their families at home.

I do not feel comfortable being in a room that does not follow proper physical distancing recommendations of at least 6ft, ESPECIALLY when I cannot require students to wear a mask in class. I understand that some people have medical conditions that make it unsafe for them to wear a mask, but unless an individual has such a condition, they should be required to wear a mask while in class or when in close proximity of others.

In middle school, students change classes all day and the desks are not required to be wiped down between classes (nor is there sufficient time to do so). If kids wear masks at their desks, it can at least minimize the number of particles that are left behind on that desk for the next student to come in contact with.

I know that face-to-face instruction is what's best for the kids, and we all miss the social interactions, especially for our keiki in middle school who are in a crucial developmental stage. Please keep in mind however, that forcing face-to-face instruction to happen too soon without proper physical distancing will compromise the health and safety of everyone at school, and their families. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs places safety needs just above physiological needs. Nobody will be able to teach or learn properly if they are preoccupied with their own safety.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Sarah Kern

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 20-21 School Year

Crystal Lorian <clorian22@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:51 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm a concerned employee of the DOE. I live with two elderly parents and considered to be at higher risk myself. It's imperative that when we return back to work that we are going back to a safe environment for both students and staff.

Therefore, I believe that the DOE should mandate students desks must be placed at least 6ft apart and everyone be required to wear a face covering.

I understand that these are difficult times, but if we don't provide a safe environment for everyone, we risk not only schools closing down again but more importantly the lives of good people.

So once again I please implore the BOE to please mandate student desks must be placed 6ft apart and everyone be required to wear a face covering.

Sincerely,

Crystal Lorian

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

School Year 2020-2021

Gigi Miller <galase.miller@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:56 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you to express my concern for COVID-19 safety procedures that will be implemented for students and teachers during the 2020-2021 school year. I urge you to mandate students desk be placed 6 feet apart. This is crucial to keep our children and teachers safe. Their safety as well as theIr families are in your hands. Please take care of our Ohana.

Mahalo,
Gigi Miller

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Learning Requires Safety

Jessica Kato <jessicakato80@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

We all know students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach if they feel unsafe. My children are nervous when we are out in public and people walk by to closely. The said they want to wear masks everywhere so they don't get sick. 3 ft apart and optional masks will result in an ongoing fear that I worry may stay with them for a long time.

Additionally, my husband and I are both teachers and have no idea what we will do with our elementary age children on the virtual days. We may need to take off or consider jobs that allow us to work remotely. I cannot worry about my child's safety and well being and do my job well. Please provide direction to the DOE to allow teacher's children to attend school full time. This gesture of kindness and consideration will not only benefit the schools because less teachers will leave, but it will elevate the profession and be a benefit that is more valuable than increased pay to many.

Thank you,

Jessica Kato

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: DOE's Reopening Schools Plan for 20-21 SY

Kat Muranaka <katmuranaka272@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 4:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kathleen Muranaka.
I am a 20+ years teacher at Waianae High School.
I am writing this testimony with regards to the DOE's Reopening Schools Plan for SY 20-12.
I am opposed to the allowance in the plan of 3 feet social distance between students, under certain circumstances.

Current CDC guidelines regarding distancing in schools state that "Students remain at least six feet apart." Facial coverings should be worn when recommended social distancing is not consistently maintained. The June 26th MOU between the HIDOE and HSTA states "All individuals SHOULD wear face coverings." Allowing for 3 feet of distance between students who "might" be wearing masks is not aligned with current health practices. I believe that the inconsistency between the CDC guidelines and the MOU language create a safety concern for students and staff members alike. Precedence has been set by businesses and organizations that have already opened to increased attendance and public access. Maintaining 6 feet of social distance based on the CDC guidelines while requiring mandatory face coverings decreases the risk of infection, and builds confidence of personal safety. The City and County of Honolulu still enforces the wearing of masks in public places. The University of Hawaii has recently announced the maintenance of 6 feet of social distance as a standard for its classes and common areas. We need to model and reinforce the same standards expected of us in the public domain within all of our schools and classrooms. Because the MOU does not require the wearing of masks, then the maintenance of 6 feet of social distance between students during class becomes a necessary precaution. Following guidelines that are not consistent with current "safe practices" is not in the best interest of our students, school employees, and communities.

The key to effective learning and teaching begins with a classroom environment that has established routines and rituals to give students a sense of belonging, responsibility and safety. It is difficult to build a sense of belonging and responsibility if we cannot first, establish a safe environment in which to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet apart for safety

Linell Kam <linell.kam@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 4:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board if Education ~

As you have expectations of teachers to be certified and and trained, so do we have same expectations of CDC guidelines!

"Where" did this 3 feet data come from? I read CDC who are not only certified, but have data to present for the rationale of 6 feet and masks.

Not only has Dr. Kishimoto countered CDC guidelines, she has presented no data to the contrary of CDC, in regards to social distancing and masks. Allowance of no masks and suggesting 3 feet have not only placed teachers at risk, but also allowing for a covid-cluster that may shut down campuses for 100% distance learning, rather than blended.

I am not suggesting "never", but reopening schools gradually in response to NO vaccine would be the more prudent course of action.

Linell Kam
"We are all in this together "

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha

Cheryl B <burgharc@gmail.com> Tue, Jun 23, 2020 at 8:25 AM
To: Testimony BOE <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>, Catherine_Payne/BOE/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us

There are so many things to consider during these days. It would seem adding another would be a challenge. However, it is our belief that there is no better time than now to address issues that should have been considered over the last 50 years or more.

While there may have seemed to be good reasons for some of the points which we will share in the past, times have changed and there is a deeper understanding and awareness of the affects and trauma caused by misnaming places and hidden bias. We live in Hawai`i, a very unique and special place. It is our belief that the DOE should be the leader, the model for addressing the concerns, long-held beliefs and biases. We have Hā and place-based learning, kuleana and aloha.

It is with that intent that we write to all of you today.
From Dictionary.com, the definition of bias: **Bias**, prejudice means a strong inclination of the mind or a preconceived opinion about something or someone. A **bias** may be favorable or unfavorable: **bias** in favor of or against an idea. From Lexico.com: Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Keeping these definitions in mind, we would ask you to consider looking at the DOE calendar in a new light. For example, while it is understood why Good Friday was listed in the past, we now know that our schools are not based on giving one religion preference over another. Looking at Thanksgiving, does listing it as a holiday perpetuate stereotypes of Native American peoples? We have place-based harvest days that could easily be shared as a holiday. Hawai`i has an independence day as does the USA.....to think about. Will there be push back from those who feel it's taking something away from them? Perhaps and most likely, but what is the right, pono thing to do?

This leads us to the last request to consider. As places around the world come to terms with buildings, schools and statues being named after people for whom at the time seemed a good idea, we now understand the trauma and affect which occurs to those who were most affected. Here in Hawai`i, it is our suggestion that we seriously look at the naming of our buildings in the future and reconsider the names of buildings, schools, especially on O`ahu. Some of the schools had names from pre-territorial times, only to be changed so that our islands would "fit in" better as a state. By doing this, using a history written by others the impacts and truth of much was lost, colonialized and militarized.

Where do we start? We are not sure; but we must start. We can say that we are more than willing as are many others to begin the journey. It is happening on social media, in small group conversations. Wouldn't it be great if the BOE took the lead on these issues? The paths to do so are already set up. We have the ability to discuss controversial issues with by BOE policy. Imagine what the students and communities could do!

Of course, we can continue to stick our heads in the sand, put it off and avoid; but honestly, this will not go away. Looking at bias, racism and equitable learning for all are not buzzwords; they are what every one of us should be working towards. In closing: what is the right, pono thing to do?
Mahalo.
Dee Green
Cheryl Burghardt

Gmail **Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>**

reopening concerns

Deborah Clevenger <deborah.clevenger@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 5:02 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

July 2, 2020

Dear Board of Education,

Education is important for our students to become future citizens and leaders of our society. However, education should not take priority over the safety and health of our students, their families, our staff and faculty and their families. The health and safety of our communities is of utmost importance – this is why we have been following the guidelines provided by the CDC and isolating ourselves, keeping the 6 foot social distance, and wearing masks to protect not only ourselves and our families but also others.

I implore you to implement the 6 foot apart social distancing for our schools and especially in the classrooms where students and teachers are spending extended periods of time together which we know is another high risk safety concern. To implement anything less than the CDC's recommended 6 foot social distance is dangerous and will create a hazardous environment where students and teachers are put at risk.

Thank you.

Deborah Clevenger

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

social distancing

rkh <noellebrat@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 5:05 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board Members!
I am a second-grade teacher at a public school and am concerned regarding the seating requirements for next SY. I believe that it is not safe for students to sit only 3 feet apart when facing the same direction. I've been teaching summer school for the last 4 weeks with the students sitting 6 feet apart and they are all facing 1 direction. However, with the younger kids especially, it was difficult to have them keep their masks on, not continually touch their masks, keep them from walking to their friends' desks before I can stop them. I had to provide the students with breaks from the facemasks for a few minutes due to irritation around their chins and noses. I foresee this continuing to be an issue throughout the next SY. It would not be prudent to provide these breaks if the students are only 3 feet apart! In addition, the students would consistently turn to their neighbors to discuss things, share their learning. This would not be possible with only 3 feet distancing. They need at least some discussion/interaction during class time in order to learn, especially since group work, cooperative learning, learning centers, etc are not feasible at this time.

Also, if the Universities are requiring 6 ft distance, stores are requiring 6ft distance while standing in line (facing the same direction), then I believe my students need to also be 6 feet apart, especially while eating lunch! Therefore, due to health/safety concerns and instructional best practices, I strongly urge you to require all students to socially distance at 6 feet.
Thank you for your attention!
Rebecca Hirakami

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

RE: Testimony

Naomi Noguchi <naominoguchi14@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 5:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am sending my testimony as a teacher and as a parent. I strongly urge you to mandate the 6 ft social distancing in the classrooms. Everywhere else in the state requires 6 ft social distancing; so why not for students and teachers? I don't understand why this is even an issue. Why would you sacrifice the health and safety of teachers and students? What if it was you, what if you were in the classroom. I strongly believe that if the 6 ft is not mandated and if we do not adhere to the National CDC guidelines, then we will be faced with a total shutdown of schools and go to 100% online in the foreseeable future. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Six Feet Apart

Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 5:30 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher. I want nothing more than to be in a classroom full of kids. That is why I became a teacher.

Unfortunately, as HSTA President Corey Rosenlee explained, "We do not decide this. COVID-19 does."

When we open our classrooms, we MUST make sure that we have the health and safety of EVERYONE considered. I agree with the HSTA President that it would be absolute ludicrous to only keep students three feet apart in a nation where states are re-closing down due to COVID-19 spikes. Children must be kept six feet apart.

Sincerely,
Richard Stange

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

School Reopening

Careyanne Nakamura <careynaks@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 6:00 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Evening,

My name is Careyanne Nakamura and I am a teacher here in Honolulu. I am writing in regard to the General Business Meeting that will be held on July 9, 2020, agenda item "Public Testimony on BOE Agenda Items".

This evening, Mayor Kirk Caldwell announced a state mandate that requires masks be worn indoors and that everyone maintain 6-feet distance from one another. This is in keeping with the CDC's consideration for schools - mask wearing, and desks AT LEAST 6 feet apart. In addition, the CDC states that the sharing of electronic devices should be avoided - something to consider for the many schools that are not 1:1.

I am in complete agreement that our children need to come to school to learn, socialize, and build relationships with their teachers - but not at the expense of everyone's health. Please consider a townhall meeting involving all stakeholders - teachers, students, parents, and community members - in order to work toward a solution that keeps us all safe.

Thank you for your consideration,
Careyanne Nakamura

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social Distancing and face Covering in the classroom

dragonhee@gmail.com <dragonhee@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 6:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern

Students MUST be 6ft apart to keep all the students AND the teachers safe.
"3ft if facing forward" is not making sense.
It is not only following CDC guidelines but also it is dangerous for the students and teachers.

The classrooms are the space that is closed, dense, and students are very near to each other even with cautious planning.

Also, as now face-coverings are mandated, all students and staff also should be mandated to wear masks or face-coverings on campus.

I believe risking teachers' health would cause teacher loss, and again it is not beneficial for our students. Needless to say why we need to risk the kids?

PLEASE revise the policy and the plan.

Shino Hee

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Feet student desk distancing concerns

Michael Gonsalves <mgonsalves70@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Michael Gonsalves and I have 2 children that attend “Makaha Elementary School”.
Being that schools will be back in session August 6th, as a Parent I’m deeply concerned not just for the safety of ALL CHILDREN but, the extra load and responsibilities placed on the Teachers. There is No Way a Teacher with a class of 10-12 students (especially grades K-2nd Grade), can safely Teach and Manage our Children while maintaining their distance. Kids are kids, and they will push every limit placed upon them and the Teacher will be overwhelmed and not be able to Teach without the disruption of kids playing with their masks, taking it off while the Teacher is trying to Teach, etc.
Please reconsider and have at least the Elementary Schools do distance learning while intermediate and high school students will follow the rules as far as keeping their distance.

I appreciate your time and hope you listen to Teachers and Parents who feel it’s too soon to have Students return to school.

Regards,

Michael Gonsalves

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail **Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>**

3-feet apart; early assessments

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:03 PM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!

We are both public school teachers with over 50 years of experience between us.

This message has two points:

1. HIDOE's 3-feet distancing recommendations
2. Early assessment (i.e., diagnostic testing)

Regarding Point #1: Being 3 feet apart and all facing forward goes against the CDC guidelines. It doesn't matter which direction you face. The droplets from speaking, coughing, sneezing, etc. even with a covering can reach 3 feet all around. Please keep it at 6 feet apart (and even then, it's questionable).

Regarding Point #2: The HIDOE Return to Learn: Principal's Handbook (http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%202.pdf) mentions, starting on Page 16 ("Learning Assessments") that all schools must assess their students within the first two weeks of school.

Shouldn't the focus of opening schools be for students' and teachers' well-being (health and wellness)? What will students think when they must take a test? The focus should be on well-being, SEL, and refocusing lessons and assessment tasks **within** the learning (as well as adequate and thorough planning for distance learning). There will be learning trauma if we don't focus on welcoming students back into a safe and nurturing environment, and instead barrage them with tests. An alternative would be to do smaller assessment tasks within the learning. Performance data is not the most important thing right now.

Here are some references against giving assessments at the start of the school year. They seem to be more focused on Mathematics, but the basic principles apply to all content areas.

- https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/teaching-supervising-assessment-beyond.pdf (Pages 14-15)

- https://mc2.nmsu.edu/files/2020/06/NCTM_NCSM_Moving_Forward.pdf (Page 7)
- https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/ (in section "Behavioral Health/Emotional Support for Children and Adolescents")
- https://achievethecore.org/page/3267/2020-21-priority-instructional-content-in-english-language-arts-literacy-and-mathematics (PDF; Pages 11-12)
- https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf (Page 7)
- https://buildingmathematicians.wordpress.com/2020/05/21/how-not-to-start-math-class-in-the-fall-2020/

We ask that you consider these issues for the sake of our students and teachers. Please empathize with them.

Mahalo,
Keith & Patricia Ishihara

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Andrea Nance <andrea.nance@aol.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher writing out of outrage at the proposed 3 feet distancing rule. How can the BOE go against the CDC guidelines that state:

Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes). https://www.cdcgov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

Is the BOE more concerned about politics instead of the safety of students, families, and educators? Also, when was the last time a BOE member has been in a classroom? I want my students back in the classroom. I miss them dearly, but I am not willing to risk the safety of my students, their families, my colleagues, and my own family.

I humbly request that the BOE mandates the 6 feet distancing rule for the safety of our keiki and our community as a whole. Let's stop the spread of Covid-19 and keep leading the example for the rest of the United States.

All the best,
Andrea Nance

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot desk distancing concerns

Jacquelyn Gonsalves <jacquelyngonsalves@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:21 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a concerned parent. The 3 foot desk spacing is not safe for my children or their teachers. Especially the younger children. My children's school already has a shortage of teachers. How can we possibly expect the teachers to be able to attend to however many children you allow per teacher? It is not a question of IF. The younger children WILL turn around and they WILL lean into each other. Middle and High School should not be as much of a concern. Since the school closure my children have not been sick once. Prior to this they had a cold or cough monthly, because not all children are equipped with the ability to make safe and healthy decisions. We as adults need to make these decisions for them. Cramming them into the Petri dish that you call a classroom will only exacerbate the current situation. The recent spikes in Covid 19 cases is proof that adults can't even follow the rules, yet we expect young children to be able to keep themselves and others around them safe. I hope you take the concerns of parents and teachers seriously. The health and lives of our children and that of their teachers is not something I'm willing to risk. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,
Jacquelyn Gonsalves

DOE Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for the 20-21 School Year

Carol Paul-Paz <cpaulpaz@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:22 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

The DOH has ignored recommendations from the CDC to keep persons 6 feet apart and created their own standard of 3 feet, citing the need to encourage social development over the need for safety during a pandemic. Relationships are very important in my first grade classroom, but our leaders and those we turn to for guidance must realize that these are exceptional times, and safety is of the utmost importance.

Furthermore, Dr. Park and Mr. Anderson have insulted our intelligence by referring to classrooms of younger students as ohana bubbles, therefore concluding that masks are unnecessary. My class is NOT an ohana bubble. No one knows if anyone else in the classroom group is following the same protocols as they are, once they leave campus. Everyone needs to educate themselves about the true definition and structure of the ohana bubble or social bubble before they use the term to serve their own purpose.

For the health and safety of my students, their families, and my own family, I implore you to mandate that there shall be 6 feet of separation between each person in the classroom and that they shall wear masks.

Respectfully,
Carol Paul-Paz
Teacher, Shafter Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Re: Opposed to 3 Feet Distancing for Public Schools

Jake Yonamine <jake.yonamine@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:31 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Good evening to whom it may concern,
My name is Jake Yonamine and I work for Kaimuki Middle School and teach 7th English and language arts. I am writing to indicate that I strongly oppose having students in the classroom with a distancing of only 3 feet.

I feel it is unsafe for our community, teachers, and students to be in a closed environment with air being circulated around with the possibility of all in the classroom being exposed to Covid-19. It has been shown in Hawaii, via the news outlets, that a number of our recent outbreaks are from being in clusters in a closed environment, such as get togethers, parties, or celebrations. In a classroom, we are placed in that category and risk becoming a cluster when you have that many people in a closed area. While I believe our students can be responsible and take this matter seriously when it comes to distancing within a classroom setting, it will be a huge challenge to monitor and oversee that many students to be careful and conscious of all their actions. There are a plethora of obstacles that we will need to overcome within the next few days, weeks, and months, but safety should be a top priority for all involved when it comes to education.

In this work environment, we are exposed to a variety of people with a variety of health issues and complications that might be seen or hidden, and when it comes to a virus that is also hidden, we should do our best to control what we can, and by keeping a minimum of 6 feet distancing in the classroom is essential. I have asthma and carry around an inhaler everywhere I go, and I have colleagues and know of students who are also asthmatic, have battled cancer, and other underlying diseases that if exposed to Covid-19 might be facing extreme dangers. I sincerely hope that the state of Hawaii can reach a positive conclusion and make the right choice when it comes to protecting our communities, teachers, and students as best as we can. We as teachers shouldn't be placed in precarious situations where we risk getting sick or risk our students getting sick, and both scenarios which will lead to our families becoming exposed as well.

Again, I am opposed to the notion that schools are allowed to 3 feet distancing and I hope this will be changed before the upcoming school year starts.

Thank you,
Jake Yonamine
Kaimuki Middle School

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony:3 foot distancing is dangerous

Odin Hill <odinhill@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This runs counter to all social distancing advisories clearly the board of education has lost the plot. If the board wants to attempt some sort of sick viral science experiment, they should do so in a proper petri dish not our classrooms.

Odin Hill
Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Chivas Soares <hanaukulele123@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Placing students 3 feet apart does not provide enough protection and does not ensure a preventive measure of decreasing contraction of COVID-19. Please, let's stick to 6 feet or more to protect our keili, families,teachers,and community. Our lives depend on it!!!

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Seating distance

Colleen Pau <pauohana@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please leave the desk distance at 6 ft as was an expectation from Dept of Health. I am a high risk teacher. Do not gamble with my life.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Maha Smith <grizzcubs@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:36 PM

Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I am writing out of deep concern for my children and for my students. I am a mom and a teacher; I am incredibly worried about the DOE allowing students to be spaced 3 feet apart in classrooms. This is contrary to the recommendations by the CDC, and we cannot use our children and teachers as guinea pigs.

Please take action to protect our keiki and teachers.

Sincerely,
Maha Weeks

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please support 6 feet distancing in classroom and our Keiki

Cherylanne Lee <leecherylanne@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:37 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Cherylanne Lee. I am a teacher at Wheeler Middle School and a 21 year veteran with experience in elementary school and as a fine arts teacher at the middle school level.

Please support healthy classrooms by:

Having schools require 6 foot social distancing (class seating) in classrooms. Our MOU states 6 feet but the superintendent announced it was 3 feet.

Also everyone should wear masks on campus with exceptions requiring documentation. Our 11 fine arts classes on my campus span all grade levels and classes. A single class WILL have representatives from all core classes in the grade level. In real numbers students from 8 to 10 classes will now be in once class. Definitely no longer in a single "bubble." This is how middle school and high schools work.

I also wanted to let you know I do support that all students, faculty and staff, be screened via temperature check.

Also students, faculty and staff who travel from out of state should be required to prove a negative covid test before returning to campus.

The long incubation period will enable the quick spread of COVID 19 before even the first case appears. I love being an educator and do not want to see large portions of school or even the entire school face closure. I also do not want to put my students, myself and the communities we serve in at risk.

Aloha,
Cherylanne Lee

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kellie Frias <kelmichele_65@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:43 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing regarding Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

As both a parent and a DOE educator, I must insist that 6 foot distancing be implemented in classrooms upon our return to school this August. If this cannot be done, there should be a decision made for complete distance learning again. We should not be rushing back to school just for partial day/week schedules, which will most likely not provide adequate education, while putting our keiki, educators, and in essence our entire community, at risk.

It was alarming to read the BOE guidelines of sub-par requirements for returning to school. At the school level, teams are spending hours and hours of time trying to plan for these different options we have been given, while putting health and safety of students at the forefront of every decision. Then to hear that the BOE has cut one of the essential guidelines in half is absurd.

Education is of utmost importance, but not to the extent that corners should be cut. Without our health and well-being, nothing else really matters.

Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

shelly cassler <shelly.cassler@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, my name is Shelly Cassler and I am currently a 1st grade teacher and a parent of an incoming first grader.

I am writing to you because I am concerned with the statement that was made that said distancing between students may be 3 ft. If they are facing the same direction. I do not feel this is putting our keiki and teacher's health at best interest. Kids will be kids and even if you face them all the same way, they are not going to sit like robots and face forward the whole time. Lessening the recommended 6 ft distance to 3 ft. is not a good idea.

When writing your guidelines please keep this in mind.

Thank you,
Shelly Cassler

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jessica Kato <jessicakato80@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

We all know students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach if they feel unsafe. My children are nervous when we are out in public and people walk by to closely. The said they want to wear masks everywhere so they don't get sick. 3 ft apart and optional masks will result in an ongoing fear that I worry may stay with them for a long time.

Additionally, my husband and I are both teachers and have no idea what we will do with our elementary age children on the virtual days. We may need to take off or consider jobs that allow us to work remotely. I cannot worry about my child's safety and well being and do my job well. Please provide direction to the DOE to allow teacher's children to attend school full time. This gesture of kindness and consideration will not only benefit the schools because less teachers will leave, but it will elevate the profession and be a benefit that is more valuable than increased pay to many.

Thank you,

Jessica Kato

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jessica Kato <jessicakato80@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:44 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

This is testimony for Discussion VI (A): Department of Educations comprehensive plan for reopening schools. I am resource teacher at Campbell Kapolei School Support Center and my daughter attends Iroquois Point Elementary.

Learning requires feeling safe. We all know students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach if they feel unsafe. My children are nervous when we are out in public and people walk by to closely. The said they want to wear masks everywhere so they don't get sick. 3 ft apart and optional masks will result in an ongoing fear that I worry may stay with them for a long time.

Additionally, my husband and I are both teachers and have no idea what we will do with our elementary age children on the virtual days. We may need to take off or consider jobs that allow us to work remotely. I cannot worry about my child's safety and well being and do my job well. Please provide direction to the DOE to allow teacher's children to attend school full time. This gesture of kindness and consideration will not only benefit the schools because less teachers will leave, but it will elevate the profession and be a benefit that is more valuable than increased pay to many.

Thank you,

Jessica Kato

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Roxy Ragsdale <ragsdale@hawaii.edu> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

As a teacher in the DOE I believe the 3 feet spacing rule when “all facing the same direction” is unsafe and unrealistic. There is no way to guarantee that students will not turn to the students sitting on either side of them and start talking. Students will also be grabbing items from their backpack all throughout class, giving them another opportunity to talk face to face with their classmates. All of this talking will most likely be WITHOUT MASKS. If we can’t mandate masks when we need to be able to properly social distance students.

Mahalo for all your hard work during this difficult time,

Roxy Ragsdale

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

danayolanda1@gmail.com <danayolanda1@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Educations comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 School Year.
My name is Yolanda Dana I work at Keonepoko Elementary School in Pahoa on the Big Island. These students and staff members have gone through mining a school due to lava in 2014, dealing with the most recent lava eruption on Leilani Estates a couple years ago, and now the COVID pandemics. I want the students, staff, and community to be as safe as possible and this would mean school aged students should be practicing social distancing of 6 feet both inside and outside the classroom. Three feet in the classroom and enclosed building is not acceptable. Please change it back to 6 feet as previously discussed with HSTA and following the CDC guidelines.
Thank you,
Yolanda Dana

explain that you are testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” Please include your name, school or worksite, and school that your children attend, if applicable.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Roxy Ragsdale <ragsdale@hawaii.edu> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School year.”
As a teacher in the DOE I believe the 3 feet spacing rule when “all facing the same direction” is unsafe and unrealistic. There is no way to guarantee that students will not turn to the students sitting on either side of them and start talking. Students will also be grabbing items from their backpack all throughout class, giving them another opportunity to talk face to face with their classmates. All of this talking will most likely be WITHOUT MASKS. If we can’t mandate masks when we need to be able to properly social distance students.

Mahalo for all your hard work during this difficult time,

Roxy Ragsdale
Art teacher
Lokelani Intermediate School

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Casey Wainwright <rubyjeyne@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:53 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Good evening,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Casey Wainwright. I am a first grade teacher at Konawaena Elementary School. I also have one child In kindergarten at my school and another at Konawaena Middle School. For the well-being of my colleagues, myself, my children and my students, I want to have a mandated 6 foot between students in schools.

Thank you, Casey

Gmail **Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>**

Testimony

Malia DeCourcy <maliadec@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:04 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Malia Sakamoto, I am a parent of 3 children at Kaunakakai Elementary School on Molokai and I am also a teacher at this school. I am very disappointed with the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools. Their plan does not follow the CDC's many recommendations to start school safely as given in their "Readiness and Planning Tool" which can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/School-Admin-K12-readiness-and-planning-tool.pdf. This form is a step by step checklist to help schools open in a safe manner. As a parent I am wondering if they even looked at this document which is so detailed.

As a first grade teacher, there is no way that children at this grade level can socially distance at 3 feet. By having 6 feet between children, maybe if they do slide over or turn around to talk, they will be actually at 3 feet. At 3 feet they can easily slide over and be talking and touching each other in seconds. Which leads to my next concern that the DOH and DOE are not requiring face masks in the classroom. If I cannot go into the post office, the store, the gas station, an office building, or a doctor's office as an adult without a face mask, then why would children who are in a classroom not be required to wear a face mask? (Yes, it will take some getting used to, but if my own children can do it, so can the children in my classroom.) If I cannot go to a doctor's appointment or get on an airplane without a temperature check, then why shouldn't we temperature check children when they come onto campus? If I ask a first grader health questions, they aren't going to understand and be able to state clearly how they feel. Temperature checks do not take long and are just one more added layer of protection for our students, staff, and the community as a whole. These are all things DOE and DOH are saying contrary to CDC recommendations.

As a parent and educator, I am very disappointed in the DOE and the way they are handling the opening of school guidance. If there is no 6 feet of social distancing, no mask wearing, and no temperature checks as a teacher I will not feel safe going to work and I would not at all feel comfortable and confident that my children will be safe in the school setting. These are things that I must do in my community, so what is the difference in the school setting?

Please require 6 feet between students, mask wearing, and temperature in the school setting, not just for my safety, my children, the children I teach and their families, and my coworkers; but for our community and state to stay safe.

Thank you,

Malia Sakamoto

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Amy M <amypopieski@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am giving testimony in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”
I am a parent of a child at Aikahi Elementary School. I am a teacher at Kailua Intermediate School. I think that a distance of three feet between students is dangerous. It opens students, staff, and their families up to increased risk. We are opening schools the same week the state is loosening tourism restrictions-at the very least we should protect our children with six feet of separation.
Amy Spencer

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 ft desk

Jade Bowman <jade_bowman@wmpccs.org> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I amWriting testimony against having desks in school 3 feet apart. This is simply unsafe to both students, teachers and And ultimately families and the community. As both a parent and a teacher I disagree with this 3 ft rule and I am very concerned. I voice my opinion and a vote against this. BOE needs to come up with better plans to ensure there are no Unnecessary health risks taken. We are already seeing outbreaks popping up all over due to the uplifting of rules and protocols we will continue to have outbreaks and people getting sick and have it put on our economy and everything else if we do not take the precautions now to clear everything and make sure it is safe especially in our schools.
If we are opening schools it should be when it's safe enough to attend without wearing masks in school. Then Social distancing isn't a problem. Why rush with a half hearted plan. I know it is difficult for parents who need to work and do not have the care for the children but this is when the government needs to step in and help and not just send teachers and students to school in an unhealthy environment that's just irresponsible. It's not always about money we need to think of the people that live here in Hawaii and take care of our Ohana Sincerely,
Jade Bowman

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tina Myers <btmyers25@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:17 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!

I am writing to share my testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Educations's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

The help reduce the spread of COVID-19, please maintain the 6ft distance for student seating as recommended by the CDC and also as agreed upon by the Board of Education and the HSTA. I am deeply concerned for the safety of my students and for my own children (who attend Manana Elementary and Pearl City High School) should this distance for student work area be decreased.

The health and safety of students and teachers is of utmost importance.

Thank you,
Tina Marie Myers
Teacher, Manana Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Attention BOE

Jennifer Chen <jenniferchen808@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education:

I am emailing to voice my concern regarding the 2020-2021 school year. If we're all trying to minimize the chances of spreading the coronavirus, BOE needs to rethink what their plans are getting students and staff in the classroom setting.

Firstly, visual checks is completely UNACCEPTABLE. Students entering classrooms need to be temperature checked somehow. Teachers are not educated enough nor are they able to make medical judgements based solely on visual checks.

Secondly, a 3 foot distance in classrooms between students and staff is UNACCEPTABLE. The CDC guidelines advise a 6 foot distance in the classroom setting. Let's be realistic, kids especially elementary kids will not sit facing forward at all times during classroom instruction. Lessening the distance between students jeopardizes the safety and health of everyone! An alternative needs to be considered if the problem is too many students and not enough space to keep the 6 foot distance. One suggestion is to split the classes into group A & group B (one attending class and other doing online learning) for ALL grade levels.

Thirdly, I understand young children need to rely on facial expressions but during a pandemic like this, we should be able to adjust and modify things at least for the time. The idea that students and teachers at kindergarten level don't need to wear masks is NOT a good idea. It doesn't matter if kids 18 and under are at low risk contracting the virus. Even if they have no symptoms they could be carriers!!! The virus could pass from student to student and/or teacher. Then they take it home to their family members and possibly infect them. If the teacher is not wearing the mask, gets the virus and converses with other teachers on campus, it could potentially be passed on to those teachers and then to other students in other grade levels. Do we not see the danger about teachers and children not wearing masks?! Others around will also be affected! It is essential that ALL staff and children wear masks regardless of grade level.

Please I ask you to take these suggestions seriously and into consideration. Do the right thing and keep the staff, students and their families safe!

Thank you for your time,
Jennifer Chen

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

slindberg@hawaii.rr.com <slindberg@hawaii.rr.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:20 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Shelleen Sodersten, I am a 3rd grade teacher at Solomon Elementary on Schofield Barracks. I know this is a difficult time, however, it is important that we keep teachers and students as safe as possible. Hawaii has done well during this pandemic, but it is a concern just going back to school. 3rd grade students are impulsive and often do not follow set rules as it is. A six foot distance will be difficult, but three feet will do nothing to curb the spread of germs in a classroom.

Kids, even when educated on hygene, regularly do not follow protocols. Parents send children to school sick and teachers often come in sick because it is difficult to be out every time someone is ill. I believe the spread of this virus is already a risk without allowing students to be closer to each other.

Please consider the students and teachers and how this virus rapidly spreads and keep the minimum of six feet of separation.

Thank you,
Shelleen Sodersten

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

CDC Guidelines for Social Distancing and how to applies to DOE schools

lisa ozaki <rylmttkaco@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My concern is that if we return back to school and are practicing social distancing by only 3 feet, when desks are facing in the same direction, but the University is social distancing by 6 feet, why wouldn't public schools follow the same guidelines suggested by the CDC?

If college age students (adults) need to stay 6 feet apart, then how can we place children within a closer proximity to one another? A kindergarten student does not have the same level of social awareness that an 18 year old would have, so why place them so close to each other to begin with. This just does not seem logical. I am concerned for the health and well being for myself and my students.

At the school that I work at all lower grade students (K-2) will attend school everyday, with desks spaced 3 feet apart so that they can all fit. I don't feel confident that this is the best solution for keeping all parties as safe as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,
Lisa Ozaki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Seppelfrick Diana <dseppelfrick@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I demand that you mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks. The three feet separation is definitely a health hazard to high risk individuals and all students. I would like everyone who is in class to wear masks. If they are not able to, I would have them have the choice to do distance learning.

Sincerely,
Diana Seppelfrick
Waianae High School Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Susanna Rivera <marukahi@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Susanna Rivera. I am a National Board Certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Kea'au Elementary School. I have taught the Deaf for DOE on the Big Island since 1985. I will be testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): "Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for the 2020/2021 School Year."

Because of my student population, my students and I need to face each other and wear clear face shields as opposed to face masks over our nose and mouth. Yes, I have several versions of the clear plastic fabric over the mouth for speechreading face masks. They are like little rain forests with water droplets all inside of the mask and they fog up as well. Not good for all day. I know these things because I have been teaching Face to Face summer school, as well as Virtual summer school since June 1, 2020.

I am writing to let you know that a 3 foot distance is not really safe social/physical distancing. You are most welcome to come visit my preschool through grade 5 class of mixed Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. When we converse with each other we have to face each other. Not surprisingly, kids laugh, they sneeze, they cough, and droplets spread really far! My class is small enough that I can seat everyone 6 feet apart. We still have a "sneeze, laugh and cough" routine to keep each other safe.

Some of my students have asthma, some live with grandparents. My daughter has asthma and my husband has multiple medical issues that place him in the at-risk group. I don't want any of us to get and spread any illness. The CDC and my children's school both recommend 6 feet for social/physical distancing. I have been, and will be, using that 6 foot distancing measure with my students in school until my administrator tells me to change. I don't think she will. If she does, I will have no choice but to take leave to protect myself, my students, my family members and their family members.

Please look to the safety of the students, faculty, staff, family members and community at large. Adhere to the 6 foot social/physical distancing guidelines. They are based on scientific research after all.

Thank you very much,
Susanna M. G. Rivera, MA NBCT:ENS/ECYA-D/HH

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

michelle hsia <mhhsia@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:31 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

Parent name and concerned citizen: Michelle Hsia
School my child would attend: Waialua elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Just Open Schools

Jeremy <jeremy.bowlin@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:32 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

A three foot rule is likely the best that can be expected. I want to teach my students. We already have a teacher shortage, and cannot spread students out to other classrooms. We cannot reasonably expect 15-20 students to fit in a classroom with six feet of distance. Just do what is best for the students.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Discussion Item VI(A)

Monica Kramp <monica.kramp@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

This email is regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I was already on edge about being able to return to school safely, but after today's briefing, I am very disturbed that the DOE is saying that students can be placed 3 feet apart while facing the same direction.

The CDC and all guidelines I have been reading clearly state that the minimal safe distance is 6 feet apart. Regardless of their age, ANY human being would not be able to face the same way for periods of time, let alone school-aged children.

I am a first-grade teacher and I know firsthand that students are constantly moving, facing all kinds of directions throughout the day. It is completely irresponsible that the DOE would even consider cutting the safe distance in half.

This would jeopardize everyone's safety. The students, teachers, staff, and each and every household member of our school community.

Please reconsider these guidelines and prioritize health and safety for everyone involved. I refuse to put my life, my family's lives, and my students' lives at risk.

Sincerely,
Monica Kramp
1st Grade Teacher
Waihee School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

johnny bravoo <jhnnybravoo@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Michelle Santos from Leihōkū Elementray. I am speaking from a teacher and a parent perspective. I do not feel safe teaching within three feet as well as having my children be in three feet proximity to their peers. If social distancing In public and Private’s sectors are requiring 6 feet then why expect any less for the education sector?

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

michelle hsia <mhhsia@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:36 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I demand that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with a 6-foot distance between student desks.

Name: Michelle Hsia
School my child will attend: Waialua elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testmony

Janice Javar <janicejavar@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:37 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha BOE

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Are any of you former teachers? Are you currently sitting within one arms length of anyone or are you practicing social distancing of 6 feet? Why is the public required to practice social distancing and yet you all are asking us not to? What makes the educational setting different? Are you willing to put your family's health and safety at risk? Would you send your kid off to school knowing that the CDC requirement of practicing social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet is not being followed at schools?

The members of the BOE are being unrealistic, you will not have boots on the ground, the first day of school, and yet you all are willing to put us all in an unhealthy and unsafe situation. This violates a resolution passed by the Board that states: ".....the health and safety of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness."

Students will be with us for a minimum of 60 minutes per class period. This will not be a one time thing, it will be all day, everyday. If you think that teachers and staff are willing to sacrifice the health and safety of their families for the policies set forth by you then maybe you need to rethink your purpose as a board member.

I refuse to put the health and safety of myself and my family second to your "guidance". The governor's stay at home order and practicing social distancing is awesome because it kept all of us safe. Now the board is, more or less, throwing us under the bus at their whim.

This plan is not acceptable and common sense needs to be in place.

Mahalo Janice Javar
SpEd teacher-Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary School
5 grandchildren attend Na'alehu Elementary School and 1 at the high school

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

DannKris Morton <dnkmorton@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A). My name is Kristine Morton, I am testifying as a parent. I have two children who attend Kaneohe Elementary School.

Please put more consideration into the health and safety of our students and teachers. The CDC recommendation is "space seating/desks AT LEAST six feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk. All schools in Hawaii must follow this guideline to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

I understand how difficult it would be to implement, being a former 3rd grade teacher who had class sizes as large as 32 students. But students, teachers and parents need the Hawaii BOE to step up and solve these difficult problems so we can all get our kids the proper education they need and deserve.

All the teachers I know are scared and worried about returning to school during this pandemic. Teaching is already in itself a stressful job for teachers who give so much of themselves for their school and keiki. Health and safety SHOULD NOT be an issue for them.

Please do what is best for our students, teachers, and school staff.

Thank you for your time,
Kristine Morton

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Matthew Hastie <matthew.hastie@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:45 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

It is hard to imagine saying that keeping our keiki safe is a priority when the BOE guidelines do not even follow those recommended by trained healthcare professionals. Our experience is in the classroom and in education, therefore we should focus our efforts on finding how to teach and support best through this situation instead of saying we know better on how to keep our keiki safe. Please reconsider this guideline, if we truly want to focus on providing a safe place for our students then we must follow ALL guidelines put forth by the CDC and WHO, not altering the ones that would prevent schools from overcrowding in a dangerous situation. I urge you as both a teacher who would do anything for my students and as a first time father to soon to be born twins, please do not put our schools at risk. Please follow the safety guidelines provided by those who have dedicated themselves to medicine and saving lives. Mahalo for your time and consideration

--
Matthew Hastie
Social Studies / AVID
Aliamanu Middle School
(808) 421-4100 Ext. 267

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Evelyn Ibonia <evelyn.ibonia@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

My name is Evelyn Ibonia and I am a teacher at Kihei Elementary School. I am here to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. I firmly believe that the DOE needs to fulfill their end of the agreement to mandate a 6ft distancing in each and every single classroom. I am fortunate enough to work at a school where we have agreed on a plan to implement the 6ft distancing. However, I am extremely concerned about my niece who attends middle school. She stated that last year her ELA class had 32 students. How is it ok to have 32 adolescents only be 3ft apart? Why is it that I can't even stand by the conveyor belt at the grocery store when another customer is paying, but it's perfectly ok to have students sit closer to one another for a longer period of time? What is the point of coming to agreements when the DOE will not follow through with it?

Please, I beg you, help the teachers and students, help our families. Demand that the DOE follow through with their word.

Mahalo,
Evelyn Ibonia

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Britney Malhotra <britney.malhotra@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Britney Malhotra and I am a special education teacher at Waialua Elementary School. 3 feet distancing is not enough space between students in classrooms and should follow the guidance the 6 feet distancing recommendations from the CDC.

Mahalo,
Britney A Malhotra
Special Education
Waialua Elementary School
--
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Testimony

Keola Fukuoka <pam_keola@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:46 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am concerned with the recent decision to allow only 3 feet of spacing between students in the classroom. As a parent, I prefer that it be at least 6 feet of separation between students and that everyone (teachers, students and staff) wear a mask when indoors whenever feasible.

We've been informed by the CDC and our local government that everywhere we go we need to maintain 6 foot social distancing. So why would it not be required in school? Please change your reopening school plan so that everyone at the schools are following the same guidelines as the rest of the public to reduce risk to the children, teachers and their families.

Mahalo,
Keola Fukuoka
Parent of student that attends Molokai Middle School
Parent of student that attends Molokai High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion VI A

Danica Walsh <hokulani19@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am opposed to a 3ft spacing in the classrooms. Our students will easily transmit the CoViD 19 virus if they are so close to each other. This will force our teachers and students to be in an unsafe environment.
Please reconsider this and find an alternative.

Danica Walsh
1st Gr Special Education
Wailuku Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

P & S Refrigeration, LLC <pandsrefrigeration@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am concerned with the recent decision to allow only 3 feet of spacing between students in the classroom. As a parent, I prefer that it be at least 6 feet of separation between students and that everyone (teachers, students and staff) wear a mask when indoors whenever feasible.

We've been informed by the CDC and our local government that everywhere we go we need to maintain 6 foot social distancing. So why would it not be required in school? Please change your reopening school plan so that everyone at the schools are following the same guidelines as the rest of the public to reduce risk to the children, teachers and their families.

Mahalo,
Sonny Fukuoka
Parent of student that attends Molokai Middle School
Parent of student that attends Molokai High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3-Feet Distancing is Dangerous

Ashley Ono <ono.ashley@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I believe that 3-feet distancing in our classroom is very dangerous. Not only is 3 feet distancing we'll below the CDC guidelines, but it would also be in a small and enclosed area. As a teacher I am already concerned about returning to campus because I would be exposed to many people who I do not have control over. Driving along the Waianae coast I saw beaches crowded with tents and no social distancing occurring. This makes me think that at school we need to do everything possible to protect our students and staff because we have no control over how safe everyone is being outside of school. We need to assume that they're not following guidelines because with the rising cases it's obvious that people are relaxing. I help to care for my grandma and I could hate to pass on the virus to her because I caught it at work. I do my part to make sure I keep myself safe and those around me safe. However I can't say that everyone else does the same. I truly hope you reconsider the three feet distancing rule.

Sincerely,

Ashley Ono

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

kazuyo sugiyama <kazuyosugi@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:47 PM

Dear BOE members,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School year”.

I am deeply concerned about Dr. Kishimoto's remarks about today's announcement about physical distance in our classrooms.
CDC recommends 6 feet distance in various places and why DOE said 3 feet distance (side-by side) is acceptable? Students are not able to face the front all the time. Accepting 3 feet distance in our classroom puts students and teachers in great danger.

I am a teacher at Roosevelt High School and I love teaching my students so much. My students also love my classes and I have 181 students next school year. I have 198 students in total including my advisory students. My largest class will be 34 students. I wish to have all students back to my classroom; however, we are under a pandemic situation. Physical distancing is the most important safety measure.

I am taking care of my elderly mother at home and I am a high risk age as well.
I don't want to retire earlier than I planned; however, if our safety is not established in our classrooms, I will have to think about it.

Moreover, schools should implement a temperature check for staff and students as well. I experienced many occasions that students came to school even though they have fevers. I had to send them to the health room and the nurse had to send them back to their homes. Under this pandemic, we should not accept people with fevers in our learning environment.

Please consider mandating a 6 feet distance rule in our classrooms.
I would like to continue teaching my students and see their growth.

Sincerely,
Kazuyo Kitaguchi

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

TK Mur <traciemuraki@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Tracie Muraki and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I work at Waialua High and Intermediate School and have a daugther in 7th grade that will be attending Kamalani Academy.

The 3 feet rule is very dangerous. Why are we being asked to work in 3 feet proximity to children when the rule all over the world is 6 feet. This is unacceptable.

Mahalo,
Tracie

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nohea Goo <ngoo@hawaii.edu> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Nohea Goo, I have been a teacher for 18 years at Dole Middle School in Kalihi, in the Honolulu District. I would like to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I, like most educators, miss being in my classroom and seeing my students but the parameters shared by Superintendent Christina Kishimoto puts kids, teachers and our families at risk to get the virus and be virus spreaders. I am at a loss for words regarding, what I feel, is a blatant disregard of the recommendations put forth by the CDC to reduce the risk of spreading the disease. Instead, the Superintendent is seemingly wanting to put everyone at higher risk by stating that students can be three feet apart as long as they are facing forward. Restaurants are keeping parties of people six feet apart, banks are keeping people six feet apart, grocery stores are keeping people six feet apart, tasks being completed at these businesses do not require the amount of time students are expected to be in a classroom. The exposure time is higher.

Another issue that made me question the leadership ability of Superintendent Kishimoto is when she stated that school staff will not be taking students' temperatures. I am a teacher, I am not a medical professional. I don't feel comfortable doing a visual assessment. I do not understand why when I go to the dentist or doctor my temperature is taken by medical professionals, but kids will not have to be subjected to this and they have the potential to be in school all day. The Hawaii National Guard is tasked to take temperatures of arriving and departing passengers at the airport, the flight attendants, pilots, or baggage handlers are not being asked to make visual assessments of the passengers. Taking temperatures not only gives people peace of mind, which is greatly needed at a time like this, it provides some reassurance that the disease may not be present. If taking a person's temperature wasn't effective, it wouldn't be happening all over the state.

As much as I love my job and miss my students and co-workers, I don't think the safety and well-being of my students, my co-workers and all of our families have been taken into consideration. Over 50% of my household members are at high risk. I would really appreciate the Board of Education to review the recommendations of the CDC in order to ensure students, adults and our families are placed at the lowest risk possible of contracting and possibly spreading the disease.

Thank you,
Nohea Goo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Dondra Ozaki <dozaki@twc.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 8:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I strongly oppose the allowance for 3 foot social distancing and believe that a 6 foot distance should be maintained whenever possible. The distance between students’ desks should be at least 6 feet regardless of if they are all facing forward or facing one another. As a classroom teacher who has taught almost every elementary grade, I know that the 6 foot distance will be much safer for my students and colleagues. Why is it that almost every other public place requires or recommends a 6 foot distance and yet children in our public schools may not have to meet that requirement? We need to follow the CDC’s recommendation to space student desks at least 6 feet apart whenever feasible. A 3 foot distance is much too close! We can make this happen and keep our schools and communities safe. Let’s make the health and safety of our students and staff a priority.

Dondra Ozaki, Teacher
Ewa Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Bev Matsuura <bev.matsuura@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying regarding presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan For Reopening Schools. I do not agree with the proposed 3 ft distancing between students. I feel that the students should be seated at least 6 ft apart. Our students are not test subjects. Their safety should be your first priority above all else. Without a well thought out plan in place with expert advice you should not be reopening schools.

Mahalo,

Beverly Matsuura

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jihan Ahmed <jihana7@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. BOE should require 6 feet of distancing in schools just like the CDC recommends, by not doing so you are putting students and teachers at higher risk of catching/spreading Covid-19. Why is 6 feet the expectation everywhere else BUT the classroom? Why should college students be distanced 6 feet, but students just a year younger than them in high school be distanced 3 feet. & why are teachers, many of whom are at high risk or may have high risk relatives be asked to work in an environment not following CDC guidelines. What are social distancing expectations for an inperson BOE meeting? I'd assume 6. Why less for teachers & students? Health and safety needs to be a priority for students and teachers.

Sincerely,
Jihan Ahmed

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Distancing

Dawn Shirota <dfaith808@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: "dfaith808@yahoo.com" <dfaith808@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:04 PM

Aloha, I am very concerned about the stance of having 3 feet between students desks in Hawaii public schools. I ha e worked for 22 years in the Hawaii Department of Education and worked in Elementary, Intermediate, Middle and High School. This 3 feet rule is not recommended by the CDC and should not be allowed during the Covid pandemic. Please support teachers by following the minimum 6 feet distance when opening up our schools. MAHALO, Dawn Shirota

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Cory Horwitz <corymhorwitz@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Cory Horwitz and I am a Special Education teacher and parent of three children in the HIDOE. I want to start this testimony by acknowledging that it is of high importance that we get our keiki back into the classroom as soon as possible. Schools serve our community in so many ways and parents depend on schools to meets the needs of their families. Schools are also a safety net for our most vulnerable keiki which and is an invaluable resource. With that said, I believe the current plan to open all "Level 1" schools or those schools who have the space to bring students back with 3ft distancing is reckless and premature.

My current school discussed plans today to have students return with 3ft distancing and class sizes of 20 students. As a parent, I am not willing to send my own children to the campus I teach on. We live in a multi-generational household and cannot take a chance that our children or myself will bring COVID-19 home to our kapuna. The standard for all businesses, churches, gatherings etc. has been 6ft since the start of this pandemic and schools should be no different. Should our campus open with 3ft distancing, I will be pulling my children out of the HIDOE and having to possibly leave my job as a teacher to ensure their education at home is adequate.

In closing, I am not advocating that we keep kids out of school, but rather asking you to reconsider the current option of returning the campus with 3ft distancing. Schools on the mainland are seeing cases in daycare centers and internationally many schools have had to close their doors a second time due to COVID spread. If we open our schools without the upmost caution we are creating a greater risk of having to close our doors again too. With the opening of school aligning with the opening of mainland travel we cannot say with certainty that we will not see a rise in the community spread of this disease. Please do not take unnecessary risks with the health of our faculty, staff, and students. Please do not put families in the position of having to choose between health and school. Please DO consider a more conservative approach to the reopening of school until our state can assess the impact of increased tourism.

Mahalo,
Cory Horwitz

Testimony

Christine <christinewolfrum@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

It is imperative that the DOE requires 6 ft distancing and facemasks in classrooms. Even though it is become “acceptable” that teachers teach with no supplies, abhorrent conditions, despicable pay, and navigate distance learning with LITERALLY NO GUIDANCE, the one thing teachers can’t do is teach our keiki from heaven.

Our greatest treasures are our older teachers. They deserve to work in a SAFE environment. Many 20-30 year veteran teachers are the GLUE of our schools. Not having FIRM safe guidelines to PROTECT these individuals who have DEDICATED their lives to the children of Hawaii is absolutely criminal.

If 3 ft isn’t social distancing in ANY OTHER PLACE, it isn’t acceptable in a classroom. (A classroom which I might add is likely not a classroom at all, but an AIRLESS PORTABLE BUILDING, not a permanent structure built with the comfort and learning of students in mind.)
Enough is absolutely enough.

Let’s be an EXAMPLE. Let’s keep our teachers and students safe. Why wouldn’t you want to hire public health nurses to do mandatory temperature checks? Why is it the teachers kuleana to do “visual checks”, and not the DOE’s responsibility to use SCIENCE to create procedures for protecting our children, Kumu, and communities? Why don’t you want to take EVERY precaution that no child or adult DIES as a result of inadequate safety measures?

Christine O’Sullivan
Pukalani Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

Lorelei Fajardo <ll.fajardo@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am writing in concern to the 3 foot distancing in classrooms. I feel that this is unsafe and detrimental to the students, teachers and families and puts all of us at risk. Please mandate to 6-foot distancing between student desks so everyone is safe and puts our minds somewhat at ease. Please put safety first for everyone.

Thank you,
Lorelei Bandola
Pearl City Highlands Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sherrilyn Sampaia <sherri.sampaia@icloud.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI (A): “Presentation on Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening school plan for the 2020-2021 school year”.

Mandate that classrooms be configured by six feet between student desks.

My name is Sherri and I am a second grade (prior kindergarten) teacher at Kapiolani Elementary school on Hawaii island.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs point out that we can’t reach our fullest potential until basic needs are met- in this case it’s safety.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

No to 3ft classroom distancing

Marlene Medeiros <mkmedeir@hawaii.rr.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
It is in the public interest to follow the CDC guidelines of keeping people 6ft apart. It's conflicting as to why the BOE/DOE is not taking heed to medical/scientific professionals suggestions. Cory is right, it's "ludicrous". As stakeholders in our keiki and community health, we need to be socially responsible for the heath and safety within our communities. Please change these guidelines to 6ft apart no matter what direction students face.

Mahalo,
Pua Medeiros
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Linell <aplusmktg@aol.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:16 PM
Reply-To: Linell <aplusmktg@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

RE: Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”
==========

Dear Board if Education ~

As you have expectations of teachers to be certified and and trained, so do we have same expectations of CDC guidelines!

"Where" did this 3 feet data come from? I read CDC who are not only certified, but have data to present for the rationale of 6 feet and masks.

Not only has Dr. Kishimoto countered CDC guidelines, she has presented no data to the contrary of CDC, in regards to social distancing and masks. Allowance of no masks and suggesting 3 feet have not only placed teachers at risk, but also allowing for a covid-cluster that may shut down campuses for 100% distance learning, rather than blended.

I am not suggesting "never", but reopening schools gradually in response to NO vaccine would be the more prudent course of action.

Linell Kam
"We are all in this together "

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft distancing.....

Kainoa Arensdorf <kainoaa@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:20 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a school counselor that works closely with students at Mountain View Elementary School on the Big Island of Hawaii. It is dangerous and unacceptable for Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent Kishimoto to place school employees in unsafe, unhealthy and risky situations. It is also against our teacher contract. Students, as well as, the teachers should not be placed these conditions. We educators are willing to teach remotely and in person with proper, recommended, social distancing at all times.
Thank you for taking the time to hear my concern,
Kainoa M. Arensdorf

3 feet of distancing is a better choice than my 5 year old home alone half the week so I can teach!!!!

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:22 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha, I am writing you to say that I would prefer 3 feet of student distancing if it means that we can all be in class together and not do blended/hybrid learning. The problem is,I am a teacher that doesn't want to leave my five-year-old a latch key student at home by himself and I have no extra money for child care due to the low wages I receive. If my husband tells his workplace that he can work Monday and Tuesday, but not Wednesday,Thursday, or Friday because he needs to watch our child, and then the next week, he can work Wednesday,Thursday, and Friday, but not Monday and Tuesday, they will fire him and only hire people without children. I don't think it's fair for me to go to work and teach other people's children all day, yet not be able to make sure that my three children are safe. If my husband loses his job, we will not be able to put food on the table or pay our mortgage. Many people in the general public will have problems as well with this blended learning model!!! With this model, however, most people in the general public, can opt to do homeschooling co-op's and watch/homeschool each other's children. We teachers do not have that option. I have no family here to help watch my child, and I cannot afford for my husband to lose his job! And just think about all the single parents out there that are teachers, and the homes where both parents are teachers!!!! What are we to do? If there are no childcare options for us, I will be forced to quit because the safety of my children comes first. Many of us teachers will be forced to quit! So that's why I would rather risk a mere 3 feet of student desk distancing —if it means that all my students can return, and there is no need for "blended" learning! At least then, my children have somewhere safe to go. There will be plenty of lawsuits and news stories if this child care issue is not addressed. Droves of children will be left at home alone due to parents having to work, not just teachers' kids, but the general community around us! Many will pull their children out and homeschool them, and the ones that are not able to, will end up bringing lawsuits for anything negative that happens to their children for being put in this predicament. So do I wish every classroom was safe and we could be 6 feet apart? Sure, my husband had a heart attack three years ago and survived and he is an at-risk person. I would not want to bring COVID-19 home to infect him. However, I am even more worried about where my children will go while I teach everyone else's children. There are kidnappings going on on the Big Island and in Oahu right now. All it takes is kidnappers knowing that families are having to leave their children home alone in order to go to work and boom, kids missing!!! All because the schools are not open full-time. All it takes is one story and the BOE and DOE and even more people will be held liable. So I think it's most important that we do NOT do a blended learning schedule! If we have to, we need to be given options for our children – both the teachers, and the general public need a solution! We should not have to choose between starving and being homeless and our kids being alone, unsupervised! And for teachers, this problem is even harder, because we don't have an option for trade-offs, nor enough money for childcare we didn't plan on. When kindergarten comes you kind of plan on your kid being there and budget your expenses to fit that picture. I wish we could all be 6 feet apart and also have childcare options, but if I had to choose I would take my whole class back AND my neighbor's class, just let me know that my kids have somewhere to go, somewhere safe to be. I also don't think it's fair to have to put them back in preschool or daycare because there are no other options. And even if I wanted to do this, there are virtually no openings on the West Side of Maui! Just call Patch and you can see. In addition, my children deserve and need to learn too, and 11-year-olds are not old enough to watch five-year-olds. It would not be fair for my 11 year old to miss out on learning in order to become a "mom" to her siblings at such a young age so that her own mom can go teach other people's kids. This is a huge problem, and I kindly, yet emphatically, implore you to please help! Thank you so much for time and consideration. Mahalo Nui Loa, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: VI(A): Presentation on DOE's Comprehensive Reopening Plan

sheryl O <petmongoose@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: ryamanaka@hsta.org

Aloha Board of Education Members:
I am Sheryl Ogawa, a teacher at Pahoa High & Intermediate School on the Big Island. I have been teaching predominantly middle school students for 28 years, and I have been through it all. Furthermore, my classroom will not have any air conditioning. I will just have ceiling fans.

3 feet between students is not acceptable. 6 feet between people is standard practice for everyone in the State of Hawaii, while in public places where there is free flowing air circulation like standing in line to go into Safeway. Yet, the BOE wants 3 feet between students in an enclosed room with just ceiling fans? Unacceptable. 3 feet is too close. With 3 feet between students, they can still touch each others' person and objects and desks. Middle school students are squirmy and they are still learning what personal space feels like. Do not try to confuse our students by adding this exception for social distancing. Furthermore, they will take that information home to their guardians/parents who will feel it's okay for them to use the 3 feet proposal, thwarting our State's recommendation of 6 feet. Stick to 6 feet.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.
Sheryl Ogawa
Teacher
Pahoa High & Intermediate School

Sent through ʻopeʻapeʻa express

Testimony

Blake Hamura <blakester96720@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. I think it's a terrible idea to allow 3 feet of distance between students as it does NOT follow CDC guidelines to minimize the spread of this virus. A minimum of 6 feet is recommended by the CDC. I also disagree to allow for individuals not to wear masks. For the health and safety of our keiki, faculty and staff, I am submitting my testimony for your consideration.
My name is Blake Hamura from the Hilo/Waiākea Complex Area. My daughter is a junior at Hilo High School and my wife is a curriculum coordinator at Kaumana Elementary School.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Paula Whitaker <paulabaileywhitaker@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Paula Whitaker. I am writing to give testimony on the department of education's comprehensive plan for re-opening schools for the 2020-21 school year. I worked in central O'ahu at Daniel K Inouye Elementary. My daughter attends Mililani High School.

I am extremely upset about the recommendation to space desks Only 3 feet apart. Teachers are worried that we will become infected or bring COVID home to our families. As a teacher, I say with conviction that relaxing the social distancing guidelines is unacceptable. Teachers should not be asked to put themselves at greater risk than the general public. As a parent, I also find the relaxed recommendation unacceptable. My child deserves an environment where she can learn safely.

Teachers in Hawaii are already underpaid and under appreciated. We buy many of our own supplies, and have classrooms that are overcrowded. We often lack support from administrators and don't have the resources our students need. Putting teachers in an unhealthy environment during a pandemic is the last straw. Many teachers, myself included, have elected not to teach this year because of the dangers.

Hawaii is losing good teachers, and will continue to lose more if school employees aren't given a safe place to work. Please reconsider the plan.

Paula Whitaker

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

David berry <dberry1954@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

David Berry
Ka’u High and Pahala Elemtary.
Middle and High Special Education

If my students only have to be 3 feet apart, with or without face masks, it will only amplify the spread of COVID 19.

Please do not allow schools to start until we not only feel safe, but are safe. Too many people will be endangering themselves and others. Keep our Keiki safe and teachers safe, especially those of us who are over 60 and who have serious other ailments.

Mahalo

David Berry

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: social distancing for schools

nakasonex4@hawaiiantel.net <nakasonex4@hawaiiantel.net> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it may concern,

Please reconsider social distancing to 6 feet as everyone has been using. In addition, students should be wearing masks in the classroom. For those of you who are parents or have been around kids, you know their hygiene isn't the best. How many time a day you see kids picking their noses in class. Students cough and sneeze without covering their mouths.

I feel the current opening school procedures will be asking for trouble. How can the DOE and Board of Education say the safety of staff and students are their priority. Is it really or just all for shibai.

Mahalo,

Jay

Testimony: 3 feet of distancing is a better choice than my 5 year old home alone half the week so I can teach!!!! (Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 202...

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:30 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Date: July 2, 2020

Aloha, I am writing you to say that I would prefer 3 feet of student distancing if it means that we can all be in class together and not do blended/hybrid learning. The problem is,I am a teacher that doesn’t want to leave my five-year-old a latch key student at home by himself and I have no extra money for child care due to the low wages I receive. If my husband tells his workplace that he can work Monday and Tuesday, but not Wednesday,Thursday, or Friday because he needs to watch our child, and then the next week, he can work Wednesday,Thursday, and Friday, but not Monday and Tuesday, they will fire him and only hire people without children. I don’t think it’s fair for me to go to work and teach other people’s children all day, yet not be able to make sure that my three children are safe. If my husband loses his job, we will not be able to put food on the table or pay our mortgage. Many people in the general public will have problems as well with this blended learning model!!! With this model, however, most people in the general public, can opt to do homeschooling co-op’s and watch/homeschool each other’s children. We teachers do not have that option. I have no family here to help watch my child, and I cannot afford for my husband to lose his job! And just think about all the single parents out there that are teachers, and the homes where both parents are teachers!!!! What are we to do? If there are no childcare options for us, I will be forced to quit because the safety of my children comes first. Many of us teachers will be forced to quit! So that’s why I would rather risk a mere 3 feet of student desk distancing —if it means that all my students can return, and there is no need for “blended” learning! At least then, my children have somewhere safe to go. There will be plenty of lawsuits and news stories if this child care issue is not addressed. Droves of children will be left at home alone due to parents having to work, not just teachers’ kids, but the general community around us! Many will pull their children out and homeschool them, and the ones that are not able to, will end up bringing lawsuits for anything negative that happens to their children for being put in this predicament. So do I wish every classroom was safe and we could be 6 feet apart? Sure, my husband had a heart attack three years ago and survived and he is an at-risk person. I would not want to bring COVID-19 home to infect him. However, I am even more worried about where my children will go while I teach everyone else’s children. There are kidnappings going on on the Big Island and in Oahu right now. All it takes is kidnappers knowing that families are having to leave their children home alone in order to go to work and boom, kids missing!!! All because the schools are not open full-time. All it takes is one story and the BOE and DOE and even more people will be held liable. So I think it’s most important that we do NOT do a blended learning schedule! If we have to, we need to be given options for our children – both the teachers, and the general public need a solution! We should not have to choose between starving and being homeless and our kids being alone, unsupervised! And for teachers, this problem is even harder, because we don’t have an option for trade-offs, nor enough money for childcare we didn’t plan on. When kindergarten comes you kind of plan on your kid being there and budget your expenses to fit that picture. I wish we could all be 6 feet apart and also have childcare options, but if I had to choose I would take my whole class back AND my neighbor’s class, just let me know that my kids have somewhere to go, somewhere safe to be. I also don’t think it’s fair to have to put them back in preschool or daycare because there are no other options. And even if I wanted to do this, there are virtually no openings on the West Side of Maui! Just call Patch and you can see. In addition, my children deserve and need to learn too, and 11-year-olds are not old enough to watch five-year-olds. It would not be fair for my 11 year old to miss out on learning in order to become a “mom” to her siblings at such a young age so that her own mom can go teach other people’s kids. This is a huge problem, and I kindly, yet emphatically, implore you to please help! Thank you so much for time and consideration. Mahalo Nui Loa, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3-foot distancing

Natalia Kotula <nataliaannakotula@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

This email is regarding a recent announcement by the BOE that would allow students to sit as close as 3 feet together.

I am a middle school teacher for the DOE, and, frankly, I find this announcement terrifying. Returning back to school in August is already anxiety-inducing, given that I have a 2-week old newborn baby. I have to rely on 130 of my students and their families that they are taking all necessary precautions to keep themselves COVID-free as I have regular and close interactions with them for the next 10 months.

I have faith in my administration that our school will do as much as possible to keep our teachers and keiki safe, but fear that schools will start to be pressured to conduct more face-to-face and risky learning in the light of premature loosening restrictions - ones that the CDC itself does not promote.

Right now, through most of America, gatherings of 10+ individuals is restricted. This is taking into consideration that these individuals are also maintaining 6 feet distance. Already, the traditional classroom does not and will not ever look like this.

The BOE needs to understand that SAFE traditional schooling will not be possible until a COVID vaccine is readily available. Any attempts to return to normal prematurely is actively allowing and promoting disease spread. In April, teachers were threatened with pay cuts. Now, we must spend our summers preparing for an entirely new teaching environment. And come August, we will be putting ourselves and families in danger every day if reopening plans are not thoroughly considered. If teachers were not burnt out before, they certainly are now. And we are only getting started in dealing with this crisis.

I implore you to find enough compassion to simply keep safe ALL individuals who have to return to school next year.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope that pleads like mine will be taken seriously and not fall on deaf ears.

Natalia Kotula

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Extreme Concern About 3ft Distancing

Claire Dobson <clairejdobson0@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to advocate for the safety of my students, their families, my colleagues, and my school community. As a school counselor, I have had mounting concerns thoroughout this global pandemic for the social and emotional well-being and health of every individual on our campus. While I am on board for us to cautiously reopen our schools so as to best service our students - I would like to emphasize the need to do this slowly and with care.

I'd like to refer you to the Center for Disease Control's webpage where they define social distancing. While no one knows how to best handle this virus in order to keep it under control yet, we absolutely have to be following the best recommendations that we have access to until we can learn more. Our decisions must come from a data driven and evidenced based place, we cannot rush how we reopen simply for convience's sake. Please see the link below.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html

I would like to emphasize the part where this webpage says, "**To practice social or physical distancing stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people."** As a school counselor who would like to remain ethical, I have to speak up here and advocate for the health of my students and staff. While we may not all be able to agree on the best way to reopen, we need to at very least be able to agree that we need to be following these guidelines as this is the most informed information that we have at this time. Ignoring this call for at least 6 feet of distancing, is a disservice to my students and it disregards their safety as we continue to traverse these unknown and unprecedented times. A 3 foot "distancing" is not what our CDC would define as social distancing and so it makes no sense that we would be considering this option and telling people that we are enforcing distancing at all, because the recommended distance is at least 6 feet. Please reread that last sentence again.

Hawaii has done notably well in our work to keep Covid-19 case numbers low. Now is not the time to throw all of that effort to the wind and to suddenly decide we don't need to follow these guidelines anymore. I am so proud of how this situation has been handled by our state and I believe that we need to continue to set a solid positive example.

Furthermore, it would be absolutely unethical and brash not to consider the implications ignoring these guidelines could do to the Native Hawaiian community. I cannot stay silent about this and call myself an ethical counselor. This community's culture is one that our state benefits from abundantly through tourism, and they must be allowed to live safely without their dwindling numbers being threatened. We must be moving forward with these thoughts in mind and these reminders that they are to be protected.

Do the right thing for the our community because ultimately, it is what is best for the state as well. Our students deserve to be taught in a healthy and safe environment. This is absolutely baseline for a child to be able to truly absorb and learn. We are all ready for things to get back to somewhat normal, but let's not rush this and get it wrong. We have vulnerable communities to consider.

While this year is going to present some ongoing and brand new obstacles, I urge you to trust your educators to rise to these challenges. To quote the Greek philosopher Plato, "Necessity is the mother of innovation." These growing and unforeseen needs will bring us together in order to find innovative and creative ways to service our students despite the guidelines. It is foolish not to allow us to try this the right way before deciding we need to skip ahead to non-distancing measures. I can vouch for the dedication of many of the individuals I work with in my complex. We can use this time to come up with effective solutions and while this may take a bit of trial and error and it may be a bumpy road ahead, I can assure you that these educators will pull through for their students. We need to be viewing this as an opportunity to really change some things and improve Hawaii's education. Imagine a world where people remember how Hawaii handled their education department during this pandemic. Imagine a world where more teachers are passionate about making a living here and staying because they know, Hawaii backs their educators.

Thank you, I very much appreciate your time and implore you to do what is right for my school community.

High Regards,

Claire Dobson
K-2 School Counselor
Princess Nāhi'ena'ena Elementary School
Maui, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kainoa Arensdorf <kainoaa@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:34 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Members of BOE,

My name is Kainoa Arensdorf and I am a school counselor that works closely with students at Mountain View Elementary School on the Big Island of Hawaii. My children also attend Mountain View Elementary and I will take their health and safety very seriously by not sending them to school at the August 4th re-opening, start of sy 20-21. It is dangerous and unacceptable for Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent Kishimoto to place school employees in unsafe, unhealthy and risky situations. It is also against our teacher contract. Students, as well as, the teachers should not be placed these conditions. We educators are willing to teach remotely and in person with proper, recommended, social distancing at all times.
Thank you for taking the time to hear my concern,
Kainoa M. Arensdorf

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft is NOT enough

Amber Takatani <ambertakatani@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Do not push to open schools just to open schools. From what I see there is no thoughtfulness in safety as a priority. 3ft distancing is ridiculous, we might as well have our arms open inviting the coronavirus to infect us all. Reconsider this as we all are aware of the current spike in cases around the United States, Hawaii included. In addition, the quarantine will soon be lifted for mainland travelers, opening the door to increased infections. It only takes one person to infect many, with the quarantine lifted the possibility of schools having an outbreak will soon be inevitable. Thank you for your consideration.

Amber Takatani

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

amy shishido <amys4@live.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:35 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting this testimony regarding Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. Specifically, I strongly disagree with the decision to allow 3-feet spacing between students in the classroom. This is unsafe and sends the message that CDC guidelines to keep people safe are to be followed by everyone, but the keiki in our state. Their lives are important, too. Until the CDC guidelines change, allowing for only 3-feet spacing is not acceptable.

Thank you for your time and for reconsidering this decision.

Amy Shishido
Kawananakoa Middle School Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft distancing is asking for problems

Jenny Yamamoto <jennyyamamoto@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:37 PM
Reply-To: "jennyyamamoto@yahoo.com" <jennyyamamoto@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE members,

Please join us at the start of the school year and be in the classroom 3 ft apart from the students who may sneeze, cough and forget to face forward at all times. This is unacceptable and puts the students and teachers at risk for Covid.

Please reconsider,
Jenny Yamamoto

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

k chong <jkchong43@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a Pre-K Special Education Teacher at Holomua Elementary School located in Ewa Beach. 3 of my 5 keiki attend Holomua, and my older 2 attend Dream House Charter School.

As a parent, I am not comfortable allowing my children to attend school knowing that their peers are at risk of spreading germs when a mask "should" be worn. I would prefer a 6 feet mandatory distance between desks. As an educator, although I am estimated to have only 6 preschoolers, I am still planning to separate my students at least 6 feet apart because I know that these young keiki may not even understand why they can't touch their peers or play with them. I'm still trying to grasp the idea of my preschoolers wearing masks, which I know is going to be a challenge in itself. I'm not sure but it seems as if things are not ready for our keiki of Hawai'i to return to school under these guidelines. Please remember, we are not just teachers, we are spouses, parents, sisters, brothers, and so much more.

I know we can do better to ensure the safety and well being of our educators and keiki.

Mahalo for your time,

Chong 'Ohana

Testimony

jkjnwong <jkjnwong@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Discussion Item IV (a) Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My husband and I are both teachers for the DOE for the past 30 years and are considered to be in the high risk age group. We also have two of our parents, age 87 years old, that live with us.

I am saddened that in the rush to get students back in to the classroom, the Board, Superintendent, CASs and Principals have not taken into consideration the risk that teachers and students are being put in. Especially since teachers are being told that grade K to 2 students must be on campus everyday, all day.

As a single State DOE system I cannot understand why the decision was not made to mandate all schools be closed until at least January 2021 with teachers teaching virtually for the safety of all! I recommend teachers would go to their classrooms daily but in a safe isolated situation and do virtual teaching for the full contracted day. All students would remain in the safety of their home while attendance for students would be taken as a regular school day and grades would be given. State testing would be conducted as usual to hold all accountable for the teaching and learning. Teachers would be held accountable but also parents must do their share to support their child(ren) and be held accountable for getting them online and providing support using CARE funds that the state received. If certain students need individual help, appointments could be made to support these students on campus with precautionary measures set in place.

When I hear about the recent meetings being held that should be collaboratively done, teachers are being guilted in to accepting the model that either the CAS and/or Principal has recommended. Teachers are being given assignments that are not conducive to the students best interest, but to just fill positions to keep students apart and, even then, the DOE is not following the recommended 6 foot distancing. It was even announced in the news that students and teachers do not need to wear a mask in the classroom. Ironically this was right after Mayor Caldwell spoke adamantly and mandated everyone indoors must wear a mask. I don't follow the thinking behind this, are we not prone to catch this virus because we are teachers?! When teachers call in sick or take personal leave, will substitute teachers be available or allowed to enter campus? What if they are asymptomatic? My personal concern is if my husband or I were to become infected that we would bring it home and infect our elderly parents who are extremely fragile - both are cancer survivors.

Even the universities are slowly closing all campuses for the first semester to conduct complete virtual learning after finally realizing the health risk of opening their campuses too early. They understand the risk and legal actions that would occur if students were put in compromising situations.

What also concerns me is most schools are only thinking about a plan to get back to school since the guidance has come out so late and are hoping and praying no one catches the virus. What they are not discussing and planning for is what happens when one or more persons at the school actually contracts the Coronavirus. What will they do then? Panic? Schools will shutdown without a plan in place.

As a parent of college age children, I know they can take care of themselves and that they understand the seriousness of this pandemic. However, are our youngest students, at the age of 5, 6, 7 truly aware of the situation we are putting them in and why they will need to stay apart from each other? If a student contracts the virus, are we as teachers held liable in anyway?

Please reconsider the opening of the school year. Yes, the DOE would be back peddling with their decision but wouldn't the safety of every person be more important than saving face and opening too soon, only to have tragedies and chaos occur on our campuses? Especially with the opening of the state for travel and tourism, it's predicted the state will see an increase in cases making everyone susceptible to catching and spreading it quickly before a vaccine is available.

Thank you,
Kari Wong
School Transformation Branch
State Resource Teacher
c/o Kaimuki High School

Jeffrey Wong
Moanalua Elementary
Elementary Teacher

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

msdemello <msdemello@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher at Olomana, as well as a parent of a 3 year old, a soon to be kindergartner and second grader at Maunawili Elementary. Despite the lifting of the stay at home order, I have chosen to remain at home with limited outings to protect my family. I am hesitant about the reopening of the schools. Reducing the social distancing in classrooms to a mere 3 feet, along with potentially allowing no face masks in the classroom, makes me worried that the safeguards I have in place for my family is all for naught. The CDC has consistently stated a minimum of 6 feet is best for social distancing. Reconsider the possible harmful effect you are putting students, staff, and their families in. Require the 6 feet distance.

Doralyn Adams

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jenny M L <migitaj@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jenny Leung, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. I am a proud alum of, and now teacher at Roosevelt High School. I was pleased when the BOE and HSTA were able to come to the agreement that is the current Memorandum of Understanding. I felt that teachers' voices had been heard, that we would be protected as best as possible, and that we were finally being valued as professionals and the integral part of society that we have proven ourselves to be during this pandemic.

Today, to hear Superintendent Kishimoto blatantly contradicting the Memorandum of Understanding on several points was extremely disheartening. The BOE and HSTA Memorandum of Understanding says, "The Department of Education will...take direction from the Department of Health guidance for health and safety measures," and the Hawaii State Department of Health's "Guidance for All" says of Workplaces, "Consider alternatives to large meetings...to limit the number of people in a room to fewer than 10 and to ensure 6+ feet distance between everyone." Supermarkets and retailers have 6 foot markers for even brief periods of proximity, such as standing in line to pay for groceries. If students are permitted to be closer than 6 feet, they will all fall under the CDC's definition of "close contacts" (being within 1 meter for 15 minutes or longer with a person).

US News reports that approximately one third of teachers are high-risk. If measures are not put into place to protect teachers, those who are able will choose to retire. Not only is there already a 1000+ shortage on highly-qualified teachers in the state, the teachers in the higher risk age groups are the ones who would likely have the most experience and the most positive impact on student achievement, which is what we need when an event like a pandemic puts a hold on our students' academic learning.

I would like to paint one last picture based on my current enrollment and my principal's proposed hybrid bell schedule. Up to 17 students (my largest course enrollment is currently 34) will spend an hour together in a classroom with a teacher, allowing for enough proximity and time for the virus to make its way to any individual there. Then, the 17 students will go to their next period class, which will be a different group consisting of a similar number of individuals, led by a different teacher. This new group also now becomes close contacts, due to the extended period of proximity. This process repeats, over and over. At the end of the day, there are 600+ close contacts in school alone, and the next day, this process repeats with the next set of students, and since the teachers are the same, the number of close contacts is now the entire student and staff population. After school, the students will return home to their families, which will, at minimum, double the number of close contacts again, resulting in 2600 close contacts in less than a week. These are only the numbers for one school. Even households that don't have school-aged children will be put at risk in this scenario, when you consider that a decent number of high school-aged students hold part-time jobs. These students will be making your lattes or preparing your takeout, and these are only a few of the part-time jobs I have first-hand knowledge of my students holding.

This is the situation that will occur if classes are conducted in a setting with neither sneeze guards nor cubicles nor the CDC recommended 6+ feet physical distancing, but enough sustained contact time for everyone to be exposed and or infected. The Superintendent's statement permitting as little as 3 feet distance between students compromises the safety of students, staff, and the entire community, and I urge you to uphold the minimum 6 foot physical distance standard put forth in the negotiated Memorandum of Understanding.

Thank you for your consideration.
Jenny Leung

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shari Y <yamamotoj@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Shari Yamamoto and I am a teacher at Ewa Elementary School. I also have a daughter who attends Moanalua Middle School. This is a very stressful time for everyone right now. I am already feeling a lot of anxiety about the thought of returning to work. However when I heard that allowing students to be 3ft away from each other, that made me extremely anxious. How is it that the CDC recommendations are 6ft apart and all restaurants and store must abide by these guidelines, but it’s ok for Keiki to be exempt from this? I understand and I want my own child to be in school but not at the expense of our health. This is not only affecting our students but their families as the entire state as well. This is exactly how Covid is spread. Our numbers are already increasing because there are those that don’t social distance and now the BOE is saying that 3ft is ok? This is not ok! Are we really willing to sacrifice our students and there family’s well being? I know I am not placing my own child in that situation. It isn’t worth it! I hope you will reconsider this. The BOE has a responsibility to keep our students and their families safe! Don’t let our students down.

Shari Yamamoto

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening Schools

Claire Santos <clairesantos.rn@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 9:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am a resident of Hawai'i, registered nurse, board-certified national healthcare disaster professional, and a Hawaii DOE-certified substitute teacher (K-12). I've been involved with the COVID-19 response as a tertiary screener for the CDC and the Honolulu DEM Task Force/Premier Medical Group, and as a volunteer public health educator for the O'ahu Medical Reserve Corps, as well as other community participation in the effort.

I am writing to express my deep concern at what seems to be the DOE's "halfway" efforts at safely opening schools when an "all-in" commitment is needed during the SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 pandemic.

A pandemic situation is a scenario where the Incident Command System, as invoked by Governor David Ige, provides leadership and guidance to the community. In the United States, the leadership and guidance for pandemic management comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in order to provide individual state Departments of Health and Emergency Management with best practices to follow. National standards and adherence to defined pathways are needed to maintain order and to facilitate data collection and evaluation... and to develop solutions.

The CDC guidelines are clear & intentional in representing the industry standard for the safe reopening of schools. The guidelines are science-based and intended to clearly describe the appropriate processes needed to protect everyone affected.

However, it appears the Hawai'i DOE is ignoring the CDC, instead "negotiating" with the COVID-19 virus by concluding that it's alright to cut the recommended social distances in half and not require facial coverings for students and teachers. That is not acceptable.

Viruses don't negotiate and they don't discriminate. They attack-to-kill any vulnerable host. COVID-19 is highly contagious, causing a protracted, misery-laden illness and too often an extremely painful death. Think about it. Besides the potential for spreading the virus to classmates and teachers, kids are often going home to congregate settings where elders and other high risk family members may be present. Do you really mean to cut back on the CDC guidance and put everyone in the community at increased risk?

Further, It's ludicrous to think kids of any age will sit at their desks, three feet apart, facing forward at all times. What person can maintain that focus, posture & position for longer than a few minutes? It seems more like the DOE is trying to push for school principals to choose distance learning.

We are in a dangerous time with COVID-19. Our residents are worn out from living in fear, uncertainty and hypervigilance; stressed out from loss of income & lifestyle; and burned out from hearing about the virus every waking minute of every day. Unemployment is causing food and housing insecurity and delays in seeking medical & dental care, yet the only "fix" is to open the state to tourists - tourists who are just as worn out, stressed out and non-compliant as we are, if not more so, and some will be arriving from so-called "hot spot" areas of the country. The potential for disaster is clear, come August.

We've got to hold the line on safety in our schools. We've got to protect our own and cause them to want to protect their own. Cutting back on CDC guidance is the wrong answer. Education, reinforcement of guidelines, and leading by example are needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html

Aloha,
Claire Santos, MS, RN, NHDP-BC
National Healthcare Disaster Professional
Allclaire Health Communication LLC

(808) 228-5611
KH6YO
From my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Adele Tamashiro <smile96816@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Corey Rosenlee <crosenlee@hsta.org>

Hi,
If the BOE and the schools allow the students to be 3 feet away, rather than 6 feet, I do not feel anyone is safe given this COVID situation.

If this is allowed, I will not send my children to school. As a teacher, I will be forced to take leave which will result in a classroom without a teacher.

Thank you,
Elementary School Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kathy Puhi <kathyc.rdh@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

Kathy Puhi
Kaunakakai elementary
Molokai High school

I would like to request that desks are placed 6 feet apart. If 6 feet apart is not feasible then masks or face shields MUST be worn in the classroom.

According to the CDC under school considerations it states “Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are **most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult**.” Physical distancing has been defined as 6 feet so why would forward facing desks be allowed to be 3 feet apart? If the person in the back coughs or sneezes then respiratory droplets land on the desk of the person in the front. If masks are not worn then the child 3 feet in front is exposed.
How is that safe? Masks and social distancing are shown to reduce the risks of COVID.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Adele Tamashiro <smile96816@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Corey Rosenlee <crosenlee@hsta.org>

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

If the BOE and the schools allow the students to be 3 feet away, rather than 6 feet, I do not feel anyone is safe given this COVID situation.

If this is allowed, I will not send my children to school. As a teacher, I will be forced to take leave which will result in a classroom without a teacher.

Thank you,
Elementary School Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

TESTIMONY

Inga Park <ingapark@me.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Chair Payne and the Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Inga Park Okuna and I am a school counselor at Kalihi Uka Elementary. I am also the parent of a daughter who just finished her sophomore year at Roosevelt High School and grandparent of two children who just completed the 4th and 5th grades at Manoa School. I am writing in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-21 School Year. Specifically, I am writing to express my concern about the distancing of desks in classrooms. In my experience with students, 3 feet of distance isn't enough separation to keep everyone safe.

Over my 32 years in the DOE, I have worked at various school sites with students from PreK – 12th grade. This summer, I was in a kindergarten classroom. The students were 6 feet apart and working at their desks. I sat down to work more closely with a student, and in the 2 seconds it took for me to sit down, one student was up and rushing to chat with a friend. Fortunately since the desks were farther apart, I was able to halt him before he got to that student. If desks are 3 feet apart, two students could easily lean toward each other and cross the foot and a half mid-distance to touch hands. It would not be possible for a teacher to catch most of the students before they could get to another student's desk. Children do not sit still, facing front, for hours. They lean over desks, move around, turn around, push their chairs back, and become restless. Removing the usual movement in the elementary classroom of students going to the floor and back to their desks will exacerbate their restlessness. Older students can even more easily reach across a 3 foot distance and the force in the cough of a high schooler would be similar to that of an adult.

The CDC has very clear guidelines stating **everyone** should remain at least 6 feet apart for their safety. How is it possible that for children and teachers, 3 feet apart is "safe," and somehow the virus will contain itself within that closer distance? Additionally, the DOE is talking about not having masks in PreK-2nd grade classrooms. I know many teachers (including myself) who have had children sneeze or cough directly into their faces. I have had children talking to me and their spit flies into my mouth. All of this is extremely alarming. Even with a mask, coughs go through the cloth for a short distance and we are advised to maintain a 6-foot distance.

Many teachers are over the age of 50. I am in my 60's. Many teachers and students also live with elderly parents or grandparents who are at higher risk. One of my friends informed me today that she is planning on taking a leave without pay if things don't improve. She doesn't feel safe. Other teachers have mentioned they will retire. I am able to retire but wanted to stick around for a few more years to help my school and to be a leader in HSTA. At the same time, I am worried about my husband who is at a higher risk due to his heart issue and his age.

Please relook at the distancing between desks and make it safer for everyone. Require a 6-foot distance between desks. If not, how long will it take before we will need to close the schools back down completely? This would be even more detrimental to our economy and to the lives of our students and teachers.

Thank you for putting the health and safety of our public education ohana as a priority. I appreciate the difficult work you do on behalf of our students.

Malama Pono,

Inga Park Okuna

ingapark@mac.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3’ Separation Isn’t Safe

Kathy Shibuya <kathyshibuya@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The reason the 6’ guideline was established is because that’s the range that the droplets can travel. If you allow kids to sit within three feet of one another, you are allowing them to sit in the hot zone in which COVID germs can easily to spread. It goes against everything that the health specialists have been telling us. Why are you willing to put our keiki and teachers at risk? Would you be okay with your kid or your elderly relative sitting within 3’ of another person? Would you be okay with having your loved one use only one side of a seat belt? No! Because using half a seat belt doesn’t make sense! Well, neither does a 3’ distancing policy! Please help to keep everyone safe by following establish guidelines!

Sincerely,
K. Shibuya
King Kaumualii Elementary teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

dragonboi4@gmail.com <dragonboi4@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”
My name is Jonathan Ikaika Vinta and I am a teacher at Ka Waihona O Ka Na’auao PCS.
It is very sad to see that the board cares so little for the safety of our states teachers, students and their families.
I do not understand how anyone could believe that only a 3 foot space between children is safe. If the university of Hawai’i at Manoa is spacing out their student body with 6 feet between students, and they are teaching adults who can control themselves, how does it make sense to allow 6 year olds to be that close to one another, when they have no sense of distancing?
We are telling families to NOT have large gatherings with people who are not from your same household, yet you are telling us it’s ok to squeeze 25 students, all from different homes, into one small classroom as long as they are 3 feet apart? I do not understand how that makes sense to anyone!
I pray you all will re-evaluate the conditions of reopening our public schools.
The main focus behind reopening should be, “Is it Safe”?? Safety should be the number one consideration and determining factor when planning on how to reopen!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Naomi McCall <naomi.mccall@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Members:

I am writing to testify regarding: Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a high school teacher at Maui High School. My twins will be starting high school at King Kekaulike High School for the 2020-2021 school year. My husband is a teacher at Kula Elementary School.

Regarding the reopening of school: my twins miss going to school, however, they also acknowledge that safety should be the guiding principle in the opening of schools. My husband and I miss seeing our students.

For parents, especially for elementary-aged children, we understand that an A/B schedule is not ideal. However many of our children are also being raised by grandparents or other elderly relatives and live in multi-generational homes. By opening schools, families are being put at risk as is our community at large.

In truth, I would love to teach my students face-to-face and have them enjoy all the social aspects of high school: homecoming, assemblies, dances, athletics, clubs, etc. However, it would be devastating if any of these students or their family members were to fall ill because of our rush to return to "normal" for schools. We also have students and staff who are medically fragile. I do not want to be part of anything that would jeopardize someone else's health.

We urge you to require CDC guidelines are followed at schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

Naomi McCall
808-283-1428

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lori O. <logoka@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: lori.okada@k12.hi.us

To whom it may concern,

I am a second grade teacher at Iliahi Elementary School. I have been teaching in Hawaii for 30 years. Spacing desks of 8 year old children 3 feet part is ridiculous! If you have ever been in a primary school classroom, children do not sit still like a robot. Their heads can actually turn to the side which puts others around them at risk.

Teachers do not stay put in front of the class when teaching young children. We often have to help them individually. When walking in between isles to help a student at their desk, we will be 1 1/2 feet apart from them, who do not have to wear a mask. Would you want to be that close to kids who sneeze, cough, dig their nose, spit on their hands then rub them together, and suck on their name tag?

Please keep our students, teachers, and state safe by NOT allowing student desks to be spaced 3 feet apart. No where in the nation is 3 feet spacing considered a safe distance.

Sincerely,

Lori Okada
Iliahi Elementary School
Grade 2 Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

DanaLei Koomoa <danalei_fishy@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

As a teacher, the safety of ALL of our keiki of Hawai’i is very important. Six feet of distancing in the classrooms and in between desk is extremely conducive to creating a safe and healthy environment. As a parent, it worries me that within the classroom my child may possibly be out at risk for the convenience of “others”. Putting teachers and keiki at risk when it is preventable is absolutely unacceptable!

My name is DanaLei Ko’omoa and I teach at Pā’ia Elementary. I have a first grader that’s also attends this school and a seventh grader that attends Maui Waena.

Mahalo nui,
DanaLei Ko’omoa

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Cindy Shaw <nicnacshaw@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Cynthia Shaw, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a parent of a child at Mililani High School, as well as a Paraprofessional Educator at Mililani Uka Elementary School. I am asking that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

According to the CDC, schools are recommended to space desks "at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk. The State of Hawaii also follows the CDC's guidelines and maintains the 6-foot social distancing requirement for all businesses. Even the University of Hawaii is spacing its seating/desks 6 feet apart. Therefore, Hawaii's public schools should also follow the CDC's guidelines. Changing the distance to three feet for children does not make sense. Children, especially elementary-aged students, are not statues who will remain facing forward when seated. Medical experts have stated again and again that we must maintain six feet of social distance in order to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

As a parent and an employee of HIDOE, I had initially felt very uneasy about school reopening. After I read HSTA's memorandum of understanding with the BOE, however, I felt more at ease because of the six-foot social distancing that was included in the document. That memorandum represented the importance of the health and safety of all staff and students. I felt more confident about sending my child to school and returning to work at my school, knowing that everything was being done to resume school in a safe manner. Unfortunately, after reading the HIDOE's policy that was published today, July 2, of spacing desks three feet apart, I am again feeling uncomfortable with the reopening. I have lost the trust that I had for the HIDOE to keep my child, myself, and in turn, my family, safe.

The BOE has stated the "health and safety of students and staff is the priority." Therefore, I implore the BOE to uphold those words by following the CDC's recommended guidelines and mandating that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Shaw

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Val Tina Oishi <valoishi14@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

The Novel Coronavirus is still appearing and spreading in our state. Ideally, until a vaccine or effective treatment is widely available, 100% interactive distance learning would be the primary method for schools. Since this is not currently the direction for our public schools, following recognized safety guidelines must be the highest priority. Currently schools are set to open at the beginning of August and it is in the best interest of our entire state to align with every other indoor function where 6 foot spacing is not achievable, and mandate usage of masks on campus and in the classroon, while "recommending" maintain 6ft distancing throughout campus. Studies continue to show that universal participation in mask usage significantly reduces the transmission of this virus. This will present challenges, but is recommended by Dr Fauci and the majority of leading scientific authorities as the best method of reopening society. As a teacher and community member, I would unnecessarily be risking health and lives of individuals if I chose to not wear a mask (as your current guidelines allow). We need to remove the choice to put students, teachers, and the community at risk by requiring 100% facial covering while in classrooms, and highly encourage usage when outside of class (outside of meal breaks).

As a parent, I would be much less apprehensive about sending my child to school if all the health and safety precautions were being followed. It is with a heavy heart that I am seriously considering homeschooling as an option for my daughter because the DOE is electing to blatantly disregard the health recommendation for everyone to wear masks when outside the home.

If we must open the school buildings, as an educator and parent, I urge the Board to support and follow the social distancing and face covering guidelines set forth by health experts as well as our state and local leaders.

Sincerely,
Val Tina Oishi, Teacher
James Campbell High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

sihu@hawaii.rr.com <sihu@hawaii.rr.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:43 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

By allowing a mere 3' of social distancing in a classroom of young children who are not yet able to understand personal space, let alone 3' is dangerous. All around us the Covid19 case count is rising and yet we are starting school with loose guidelines. The guidelines must be firm for everyone, everywhere. They cannot change just because of setting. I am not allowed to take off my mask in a grocery store yet children are allowed just because they are in a classroom and just because they are young and not as effected by Covid 19 as adults are? **A child can be positive with Covid 19 and be asymptomatic.** Allowing 3' of social distancing is not enough. You are putting others in the line of fire. Everywhere you go you see decals indicating 6'. That is the magic length. Yet it disappears when in a classroom? 3' is acceptable all of a sudden? That does not seem right. That is dangerous.

Perhaps if I were younger and more carefree I can accept 3' with a grain of salt. Perhaps if I was single and didn't have to think about myself and my family I can accept 3' with a grain of salt. Perhaps if I didn't have to care for an individual who is auto-immune compromised, I can accept 3' with a grain of salt. However, I am none of the above. What good am I as a teacher if I am out due to having to quarantine myself because I became infected by an asymptomatic child who was a mere 3' away from me in the classroom? Is there an abundance of substitute teachers that I can pick from who'd be willing to teach for 2 weeks straight or more in the midst of a pandemic? Nope. There'd be a mix of substitute teachers who would be teaching my class until I return. Or a mix of substitute teachers who would have to take over the distance learning model because my entire class has to quarantine while I recover.

I keep hearing phrases like "It's inevitable to keep COVID 19 off campus" or "You can't live in fear". Perhaps you should talk to the ones who have recovered from COVID19 and see what their take on the matter is. Would they accept 3' of social distancing? Or would they beg you to enforce 6' because they wouldn't want anyone to have to suffer and go through what they went through?

Please re-consider your stance on 3' of social distancing. It is too dangerous to roll the dice at this time. The stakes are way too high.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet is too close

Nancy Parker <rowdycru2@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I disagree with the DOE's plan to go ahead and open schools with the social distancing of 3 feet. I have students that will not understand that they can't simply turn around to watch their peers. This is too close and you are putting our students and our teachers in danger. Please reconsider the practice of social distancing of 3 feet. Give teachers a chance. We don't want to be afraid to go to work or even get sick. Mahalo

testimony

roberta shibuya <roberta_shibuya@live.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:48 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello Board of Education,

My name is Roberta Shibuya and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I am a Kindergarten teacher at Waiakea Elementary school and I am deeply concerned about the 3 feet of space between students that has been determined to be a sufficient distance to prevent the spread of covid-19 among a classroom of 5 year old's. This goes against everything we have been told the past four months. Even today, on the CDC website, it says "***Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible***". Why has it been decided that 6 feet is not feasible? Feasible is defined as being easy or convenient. Is that why the recommendation from the CDC has been passed over? Because it's easier and more convenient? We are being set up to fail by implementing this policy. With these measures covid will spread, likely to the kupuna that these kids go home to or maybe other vulnerable populations that are being cared for by teachers, EA's, custodians, classroom cleaners, cafeteria workers, counselors, etc that work at our schools. I totally get that you want to open up the community so that people can get back to work and our economy can get going again but at what cost? Please reconsider and stick with the 6 foot social distancing recommendation that was made by our CDC.

And for the love of teachers everywhere, please require either a mask or shield IN THE CLASSROOM when possible! In the "Guidance for Reopening Schools" that was sent to DOE employees it stated that a classroom is considered a "cohort or a bubble" thus “it is **not** required that students and teachers wear a mask” (while in the classroom) . This does not make health sense. After school and on the weekends my classroom kids go to new bubbles and I have no idea or control over who comes into their bubbles at their home or at tutu's house or at uncle etc. I do not know if my kids and their ohana practice social distancing, wear masks if they gather, or wash their hands frequently. I do not know if their home and weekend bubbles are covid free or if they have been exposed to someone who has contracted the virus so I am left wondering on the viral level how my classroom (with 3 feet of social distance) has been established as a covid-19 safe zone where masks or coverings do not need to be worn.

Please remember that these are not normal times; therefore, we cannot conduct ourselves normally. If we try to return to too much "normal" too soon, the number of people contracting the virus will increase substantially. Let us not go down the path of some other states and do too much too soon. So far Hawaii has been smart and safe. Let us keep up that track record and reputation. Might I suggest revisiting these requirements after the first month of school. If that data shows that

covid is under control, then we can loosen up a bit. But if we are too loose and this virus spreads, you will have to close schools again and NO ONE wants that!

I know that having kids on a modified schedule is not ideal or convenient. I am a parent of 2 DOE students who attend Waiakea Elementary and Waiakea High School. I too will have to find care for my kids when I am working but I understand that it's what we need to do to keep everyone safe. I would rather my own children be at school twice a week with 6 feet of space between them then for my kids to be at school 4 days a week with half the space, double the kids, and NO face coverings...that is a terrifying thought. I also understand that this is **NOT** permanent. I am cautiously optimistic that there will be a vaccine and things will return back to "normal" but for now we need to adopt a new normal, one where we are smart, safe, and take care of everyone.

I am not asking for the moon, I am just asking for 6 feet and face coverings. Please take care of your teachers so that we can take care of the kids.

Mahalo,
Roberta Shibuya
DOE Kindergarten Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Amie Fujiwara <amiefuji@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education members--
My name is Amie Fujiwara and I am a First Grade teacher at Mauka Lani Elementary. I am also the mom of a soon-to-be seventh grader who attends Kawananakoa Middle School.
I would very much like to share a brief testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” Having just finished teaching my last day of summer school, I feel as though I now have a better idea of what the upcoming school year will look like, including how students have responded to wearing masks, how well they are able to social distance in an environment that has always encouraged interaction with classmates, and the challenges teachers will face as they try to find ways to hold onto valuable small group instruction while simultaneously ensuring the safety of the students who will need to be working independently (maintaining social distancing rules). While there are more unknowns than knowns at this point, I can confidently testify that having students seated 3 feet apart, with the assumption that they will 1) maintain that distance throughout the day and 2) not attempt to pull their masks down to talk to their neighbors or answer questions is completely unrealistic. Even with students 6 feet apart, enforcing the rules was a struggle but the small class size made it possible for me to monitor mask wearing and social distancing, keeping my students (and myself) safe. Under the proposed plan that has all students returning to campus daily and that provides only 3 feet of distance between students, I foresee an extremely high-risk environment as students will want more than anything to socialize after being apart for so long, creating a huge struggle for teachers trying to ensure the safety of all students while trying to maintain their focus on student learning. The plan may sound doable in theory, but we need to be realistic about what will be happening in the classroom and create a plan that takes into consideration everyone's health and safety, starting with spacing students 6 feet apart as recommended by the CDC.
Thank you so much for your time and consideration,
Amie Fujiwara

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tina Rossman <christinamarie_kona@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I teach high school and my two children are in elementary school. Three feet between students is not safe. Returning to school at this time is not safe. Teachers should be able to work from home as much as possible, especially if they are high risk or live with someone who is high risk. Students should learn from home as much as possible to reduce numbers on school campuses. As a teacher, I do not feel I will be safe at school, which means my family is not safe. As a parent, I don't think the school can possibly be made safe enough to send my children back. 6-feet assured for anyone who must go to campus and a strong push for online learning in order to save lives of teachers, students and family members.
Mahalo,
Tina Rossman

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jaime Sato <jksato@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

EVERYTHING regarding Covid 19 says to be 6 ft apart. Not 3ft. Why would it be safe for our children and teachers to be 3ft apart, but everyone else, everywhere else, to remain 6ft apart? This is absolutely ridiculous. Try thinking about the safety of our children and not trying to please people by reopening schools.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Daniel Tavares <danielpktavares@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 10:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Daniel Tavares and am a teacher at Keaau High School. I would like to point out the following.

1. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

2. This past Wednesday, the University of Hawaii announced its reopening plans, which require six ft of social distancing in university classrooms and facilities. When university students are required to stay 6 feet apart, why then would you suggest 3 ft for high school students who are more immature and less likely to remain properly seated?

3. HSTA research shows that 30 to 40 percent of our educators are at high risk for the coronavirus, based on age and other health factors. By implementing a 3 ft policy between students you are putting the lives of high risk public servants at risk.

Please reconsider this 3 ft policy and revise it to the CDC recommended 6 ft.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Shawna Pacheco <imua66@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Shawna Pacheco and my children attend Mauka Lani Elementary and Kapolei Middle and there is no way that I feel safe or comfortable sending my children back to school with the current plans of reopening the schools. First of all, we all know that kids get sent to school sick all the time and also just checking for a fever, not everyone will show the symptoms, especially if any type of fever reducing medicine is given to a child prior to attending school. Secondly, what is to say that a child will not turn around in the classroom from their desk, hence why the 3 feet between them facing forward makes no sense at all, especially since masks will not be mandatory. Third, how will the schools make sure that everything in the classroom and around the school is cleaned and sanitized frequently? A child can sneeze into their hand and then touch a door handle, are there people around the school watching every child at every moment and sanitizing right after? There is no possible or reasonable way that can be done, I know that. I have a 6 year old and 13 yr olds that they still forget to cover their mouths correctly even though we repeatedly remind them. So, will the BOE/DOE be taking the responsibility of a child contracting the virus and getting sick while at school?

One of my sons has asthma and according to our family dr, he is considered high risk so with that being said I don’t feel that the precautions to reopening the schools that the BOE and DOE are taking is enough to safeguard my family, especially with the amount of cases still active and rising in our state!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

RIDICULOUS!!!

Kelcie Lee <kelciea@hawaii.edu> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:02 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE knows that we need to keep six feet distancing to keep the students and teachers safe. Why are we the only state that is doing three feet distancing? Why are we opening the state so fast? Why are we not keeping our students, families, and teachers safe? Teachers lives are not worth sacrificing!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sherri Ko <sherriko@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:03 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

I am a teacher at Kaleiopuu Elementary school teaching first graders. My 6 year olds will not stay in their seat like robots for the whole day. They will get up and walk around or want to socialize with thier friends. 3 feet apart facing forward is not safe.

Sherri Ko

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Amy Hart <ahart0408@icloud.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:06 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Amy Hart and I am the parent of a senior at Waialua High. I am also an Early Intervention Care Coordinator and I work with DOE to transition children from EI into preschools in the Wahiawa/North Shore area. It is of grave concern to me that DOE finds it acceptable to place our keiki 3ft apart when ALL guidelines for social distancing clearly state 6ft!

It is also noteworthy that a vast majority of students live in multigenerational homes with their elders who are an increased risk of COVID. I'm concerned that the DOE is not only risking the health and safety of our keiki, their staff, but also our community. Please reconsider the CDC guidelines of 6ft, not 3ft and continue to keep our classrooms and our islands safe!

Aloha,
Amy Hart

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Feet distancing and reopening is not compliant

Brandon <cloud9100@hotmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:08 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

As a teacher and a parent of a child in the public education system I do not see your reason for 3 feet distancing in classrooms appropriate. If the CDC is recommending 6 feet distancing and all public venues are adhering to this suggestion, shouldn't we be doing it too? We are supposedly going to follow all other suggestions. My daughter has type 1 diabetes and has autoimmune deficiencies so I would like her to be as safe as possible going to school. As a kindergarten teacher I am also cringing at the idea of what it'll be like to keep my future students as safe as possible. Younger children have a natural curiosity and temptation to touch everything and anything and the closer things are to them the easier it is to touch things be it peers or items of others. I am also in disagreement of your proposed models to open school. In the intermediate and high school levels I can see it possibly working but in the lower grades especially in k-2 I don't think the models will work. I really hope ideas are made with the safety of the children and school faculty first. Ideas and suggestions you will feel safe in if you were teaching or your child was sitting in the classroom. I feel public schools get the short end of the stick in many things and we shouldn't be cutting corners in the health and safety of our children and school employees. Thank you for you time and please consider all ideas with the safety of all involved.

Brandon Oka

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 ft spacing

Nicole Valenzuela <nicole.valenzuela@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Nicole Valenzuela, math teacher from Kapolei High School.

My son will be attending Ho'okele Elementary as a Kindergartner this upcoming school year.

My middle and oldest children, a 7th and 11th grader, will be participating in a full distance learning from Kamehameha. This choice was made because my middle child has a weakened immune system. She was diagnosed with discoid lupus and it is unknown how her body would respond to covid 19 if she contracts it. Once we were given the option to keep them home it was an easy decision.

With Captain attending a public school and I teaching at a public school it is very important to our family to be cautious. I'd like to see public schools enforce the 6ft social distancing and not the 3ft.

Our family is also expecting an additional bundle of joy this September and I'd feel safer as a teacher if my classroom is set up with 6 feet distance rather than the 3. If I test positive for COVID when I go into labor I will be unable to bond with my newborn with skin to skin contact and will also not be able to breastfeed. This is an important part of the first moments of a newborn's life and do not want those risks to increase. I'd also feel safer returning from maternity with the 6ft distance rather than 3.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story.

Mahalo,
Ms. Nicole Valenzuela

Kapolei High School Math Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

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Testimony

Rick Yamashiro <coachyamashiro@aol.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI (A). Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Rick Yamashiro and I work at James Campbell High School. I also have a son who attends Kapolei High School. I am a Disabled citizen and considered vulnerable to the virus. I have experienced anxiety about returning to the school setting and am extremely worried that I will contract the virus. Please help us. Thank you.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

terry taguma <terryt714@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in regards to the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. I do not agree with having only 3 feet between students. The CDC guidelines states that we need to wear a mask & to stay 6 feet apart. I cannot see how DOE can think that keeping students 3 feet apart in a confined classroom all day is acceptable. It is not safe & I feel you are putting my child & teachers at risk as well. This is unacceptable & is not following the guidelines of the CDC. Students & teachers should also be wearing a mask when in the classroom especially since they are sitting in a classroom all day.
All schools must be fully stocked with hand sanitizers, antibacterial wipes & soap in all bathrooms to ensure that all students can wash their hands and to have hand sanitizers readily available in the classroom if needed. Each chair/desk should be cleaned after a student sits on the desk/chair before another student sits in that same seat. The health and safety of students/teachers/staff should be DOE's top priority and parents need to be assured this, or I will not feel comfortable with sending my child back to school in August.

Hokulani Elementary & Washington Middle School parent & DOE school counselor
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

jkupihea@yahoo.com <jkupihea@yahoo.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. As a teacher and parent to 2 elementary age children I feel anything less than 6 feet distancing in the classrooms is extremely dangerous and negligent. I'm hesitant and fearful about the opening of the schools in August and I am seriously considering the possibility of resignation from the DOE and homeschool my children if more measures are not put in place to secure our health and well beings.
Sincerely,
Jonnell Kupihea
Special Educational Teacher and Parent
Aina Haina Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Keeping Students and Teachers Safe

Cass Asato <cassidy.jm.asato@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:33 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am respectfully writing to you as I, among many other Hawaii residents, have concerns regarding the newly released social distancing policies implemented into the Board of Education's Health and Wellness plans. The BOE is aware of the fact that keeping a six-feet distance between people is crucial to stopping the spread of COVID-19. To my knowledge, former policies have prioritized this concern and encouraged students and teachers to be six feet apart during school. Why has this changed?

Only allowing three feet between each individual jeopardizes the health and well-being of Hawaii's teachers and students, as well as their families. These policies do not facilitate the safe working/learning environments our Education community deserves.

Thank you for your time. Please stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely,

Cassidy Asato

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

jacque.barsetti@gmail.com <jacque.barsetti@gmail.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 11:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My name is Jacqueline Barsetti and I am an educator at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School on the Big Island of Hawaii.

I would love nothing more than to start this upcoming school year like I have the past 14 years, with all students every day and all day. Not to mention, it would be the easiest on me as a teacher. However, as someone who is not high risk, I firmly believe that we need to follow the guidelines from the CDC and maintain 6 feet of social distance, not 3 feet without a mask as suggested by the superintendent. Until the data shows that 3 feet without a mask is a safe distance indoors, please do not use our faculty, staff, and students as guinea pigs. We deserve more and we deserve to work and learn in a safe environment. Let’s be our nation’s role model district of how to successfully reopen schools, not the model of what not to do. Our country will be watching. What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind?

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Jacqueline Barsetti

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet should be 6 feet social distancing

Sharon Inouye <sharonminouye@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

Please mandate a 6 feet social distancing rule for schools to ensure health and safety. Three feet is too close and more parents will opt to keep their child at home full time. Also, it may jeopardize everyone's health in the classroom.

Thank you,
Sharon M. Inouye
Moanalua Middle School Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Minna Chanhboury <mrschanhboury@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Minna Chanhboury. I am a fourth grade teacher at Pauoa Elementary School. I am also a parent of a sophomore at Castle High School and a 3rd grader at Nuuanu Elementary School. Principals are planning to open schools with just 3 feet between student desks. We as teachers (and many of us also parents) understand the importance of opening schools as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics for child well-being. However, reducing the distance to 3 feet to accommodate more students in the classroom is increasing the risk of exposure to the students and the teacher. **The burden of returning to school will fall on the backs of teachers.** Teachers are being asked to sacrifice their social distancing safeguards for the greater good. We are concerned about protecting our loved ones at home as well.

In addition, my children and all our children should not be put at a greater risk while at school. If the CDC recommends 6 feet, our children should be protected by this safeguard.

If schools across the globe in countries such as Japan, Norway, and Denmark can space desks 6 feet, why shouldn't we do everything in our power to do the same to protect the children and teachers of our state.

For the safety of the people of Hawaii and to support education please require the DOE to provide a 6 feet of distance between student desks as recommended by CDC.

Sincerely,

Minna Chanhboury

Teacher and parent

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: Discussion IV(A) Distancing Determinants

Vanessa Humphreys <vhumphre@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a public school educator, I am extremely concerned in regards to the safety precautions set forth by the Dept of Education. While the CDC recommends at least 6 ft of distancing, the Dept of Education is reducing requirements to 3 ft if facing forward. This is unacceptable and puts teachers at an even greater risk as we gear up to resume teaching in the classroom.

We are still in the middle of a pandemic, with no vaccine, our numbers here in Hawaii fluctuate due to community spread, and recent reports suggest close encounters indoors are to blame for our rising numbers. You are already putting our students, teachers, educational staff, and community at risk by reopening schools without a vaccine or effective treatments in place for a virus that can easily be transmitted unknowingly to large groups of people by those who are asymptomatic. You further increase the risk of spread by reducing the spacing between those in the classroom - a virus needs a host - and a host can be easily found when others are nearby. Remember, these virus particles are airborne, so face-forward or not, they will travel EVERYWHERE and if close enough, will find a host, maybe several.

I am a dedicated educator, and I do not hesitate whatsoever to bring the best opportunities to the classroom for my students. However, I refuse to be put in a position where I could potentially fall ill and in turn unknowingly infect other students, elders, family members, or those in my community due to close contact with infectious agents I may experience in the workplace.

Yes there are risks to opening schools, and many of us teachers although terrified of returning, will put on a brave face, and will bring the best educational experience to the classroom we possibly can. We are dedicated to our schools, students, and community.

Yet, to ignore the recommendations by the CDC and to backtrack on agreements already made with the HSTA is highly irresponsible - we at least deserve the MINIMUM protections set forth by the CDC - 6 ft distancing, PPE, and continual sanitation measures. EVERYDAY we care for and keep our students protected — no matter the circumstances, without hesitation our top priority has always been the safety and well-being of our students. Now it is time for our leadership to do the same for teachers.....

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 Foot Distancing

tiana.ma3@gmail.com <tiana.ma3@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:53 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 20-21 school year

Dear Board of Education:

I am a parent of public school students and I am extremely concerned about the 3-foot distancing policy. I strongly feel that a 6-foot distancing policy as recommended by the CDC should be in place. Please do not put our children, teachers, staff, kupuna, and families and everyone else at risk.

Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,
Tiana

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet distancing

erich smith <ersmith30@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:16 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Good day,
I am extremely concerned about the proposal to only require 3 feet of social distancing. I am a 25 year DOE veteran. 6 feet is the minimum distance we should have according to scientific evidence. We do not want to put our keiki, our parents,our teachers, and our community at risk.
Thank you,
Erich Smith
Science teacher
Kalaheo High School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

kristy arakawa <kilihune007@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:22 AM
To: "Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Kristy Arakawa and I am an 8th grade science teacher at Ilima Intermediate School. I have been an educator for over 14 years. On behalf of all HSTA members statewide, I am pleading with you to ensure the safety and well being of all teachers. This means following CDC guidelines of at least 6 feet social distancing guidelines. It is so important to protect not only keiki (our students) but the teachers as well. We are doing our best to maintain a safe learning environment for our students and that means making 6 feet a priority in the classroom. We do not want to put anyone at risk! I am asking that 6 feet, not 3 feet, be the expected norm. I love my job as an educator and want to remain in the profession. That means I need to feel safe and valued as a human being. Please take this into consideration as you make any decisions going forward.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Kristy Arakawa
Ilima Intermediate School
Leeward District
Campbell Complex

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Lorena Wong <3chinitos@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:58 AM

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI[A]: Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Name: Lorena Wong
School: Moanalua HS

I have been teaching High School Spanish for 11 years. I enjoy the challenge of the different personalities and various ways that students learn. My days go by very quickly in the classroom, since I think it is a sin to "bore" a student. My classes require student participation, lots of participation in the language and we have fun learning.

It is unreasonable to allow desks to only be 3' apart when the CDC is still recommending 6' apart, until there's a vaccine to help combat this insidious virus. Having desks only 3' apart puts teachers on the "front line," which is not what I signed up to do as a High School Spanish teacher. Student's are constantly coughing and sneezing! Desks must be 6' apart if we are to even attempt to open schools and keep them open until there's a vaccine while trying to stay healthy during the Fall flu season as well. Putting teachers on the front line, with only 3' distancing will not only put the teacher at risk but create a greater teacher shortage, should that teacher get infected and need a substitute to take over.

Who do we think we are kidding with only 3' of distancing? This is absurd and ridiculous, we must follow the CDC 6' apart rule in the classroom. I do not want to be a front line worker in my classroom. We need to limit class sizes to accommodate 6' distancing by getting creative about holding [smaller] classes in cafeterias, libraries, etc. We can make this work but let's do it the right way rather than creating our own rules. The virus doesn't care!

Lorena Wong
3chinitos@gmail.com
(808)639-1841

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kaitlyn Dubiel <mcgi8921@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A). My name is Kaitlyn Dubiel and I am a substitute teacher for central district. I am very concerned about the guidelines that the DOE has put in place regarding the return to school. I work with students K-3 and in preschool and there is no way that students will sit for long and not talk to their neighbor. 3 FEET IS NOT ENOUGH!! I'm not even sure 6 feet is enough. Another issue I am concerned with is if teachers are allowed to wear masks. From what I saw and read the teachers will be expected to wear face shields only. The only thing a face shield protects is your eyes, air/particles can still get in through the sides and bottom. Are teachers going to have the option to wear a mask? Also, there was no mention on the protocol for what happens when a school has a positive COVID case. Will the individual school shut down for two weeks to quarantine? This model of teaching may be working for summer school students but I know the numbers of students are much less than what they will be when we return in the fall. People in my household and myself have compromised immune systems that put us at a higher risk of not only getting COVID 19 but having complications once contracted. I am scared for my safety and my family's safety if I go back to work. With all the uncertainty of COVID and that the state is reopening to tourists on the first of August think the DOE's proposed plan is too optimistic. I also understand the importance of not delaying our children's education even further than it already has I would just like to see a safe plan that both HSTA and the DOE are on board with. Like Rosenlee said "When teachers say we are willing to do anything for our students, that does not mean they are willing to die."
Mahalo,
Kaitlyn Dubiel

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

David Reid <dpreid19@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

In reference to:

VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

3ft Social distance is fine.

David Reid
Teacher MWIS

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Carin Shotliff <carinshotliff@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a parent of a first grader and I feel that 3 feet of distancing is not big enough for safety in the classroom! I will be home schooling my child if that is the case. Our children and teachers need safe classrooms!

Carin Shotliff

Smile😀

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

COVID response

ABIGAIL ROSE <arose46054@aol.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Members of the board of education I am here to testify that 3 feet distance between desks endangers students and teachers. Number of Covid cases in Oahu and throughout the islands is rising. Most of the increase in cases has had to do with people gathering such as for a funeral.
I believe that if you continue with policies that will endanger teachers you will have an even worse teacher shortage as teachers with health issues will need to leave the profession. You also risk lower student enrollment as many parents will not want to risk their childrens Health and safety.
Please re-think this dangerous policy!
Abigail Rose
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

C, Ms <pstamsos-correa@keaaumiddle.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion item-Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Memo states, "Creating and maintaining optimal learning environments for all students while minimizing the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19 is our main objective." However, allowing classroom setting to have a three-foot social distracting policy verse the CDC recommended 6-foot standard is irresponsible and dangerous. Especially since face coverings are optional- because everyone is facing forward.

I strongly urge the BOE to really do what is right to protect everyone in and out of the classrooms, at schools and in our communities. Help keep "Hawai'i Strong", safe and healthy. Please require the 6 foot standard distracting and mask coverings.

Mahalo,

Pauline Stamsos-Correa

Kea'au Middle School

Parent of a student attending Kea'au High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Chrystie Cobb <chrystie4salsa@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:34 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Chrystie Isaacs. I am currently a teacher at Moanalua Elementary School. I am also a parent with school aged children. My daughter also attends Moanalua Elementary School. My other daughter will be attending pre-school.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-21 School Year."

For the safety of ALL involved, the board must mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks. This must be required. If this is not explicitly stated, required and enforced, everyone will continue to be at risk, feel unsafe and this will cause more stress and anxiety on the teachers, parents, and students. Health and safety for ALL must come first.

Please reconsider and do what's right for our families and communities.

As a teacher with school aged children, I am under extreme stress because I am not sure how I will be able to do my job knowing that my child won't be able to attend school on a daily basis. The Board needs to be more explicit and make it a requirement that teachers with school aged children are considered vulnerable. As of right now, my daughter will be in school 2 days a week and home alone for 3 days a week. How is this going to work?

Thank you for your time,
Chrystie

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social Distancing Requirement at Hawaii Public Schools

John Van Ornum <johnster57@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The current Hawaii BOE/DOE three foot requirement between students does not follow the CDC guideline. If schools allow three foot distancing between students, an outbreak occurs at a school, and a student dies as a result, the Hawaii DOE may be held liable by the parents of that child. Please adjust the requirement to align with CDC guidelines.

John Van Ornum EdD
Molokai High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet

Heidie Motoyama <hidgurl@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:10 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I teach Kindergarten and it's already hard to try to keep them to social distance. This summer I taught the summer hub class at my school. I had 8 students. During the time I was teaching for 15 days, 3 of my students were tested for COVID.

I believe we need to help curb this horrendous pandemic by social distancing the students by keeping them 6 feet away from each other. They need to wear a mask. If you have ever been in a Kindergarten class, you know the students will sneeze, cough, have running nose, pick their noses, and don't really care about hygiene. I am constantly telling them to cover their mouths and wash their hands. On top of that, many get sent to school sick. How are we suppose to keep track of that?

Please keep the 6 feet mandate. Please make wearing mask necessary. Please have the schools take the students temperatures before they come into the classes. It's not only for their health and safety but for me and my family too.

Thank you!
Heidie Motoyama
Kindergarten Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Andrea Medrano <andrealmedrano@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
I am a public school teacher on the Big Island, at Kea'au Middle School. I teach 6th grade art and while I believe my school will maintain the 6 foot of separation that is recommended by the CDC, I am shocked that the superintendent said that schools could go down to 3 feet between students if they face forward. Have you ever been in an elementary school or middle school class? Students in 6th grade can not stop touching one another on a normal basis. Practicing social distancing will be a challenge in and of itself, but 3 feet is just an arms length away, and a hand, or a sneeze or cough is right there. Why is it that teachers are always the guinea pigs? Let me answer my own question, it is because teachers are willing to make many accommodations for their students and their professional commitments, usually without being asked to sacrifice themselves. This is a pandemic, it is not gone, please do not treat it like it is nothing to worry about. I am worried for my colleagues, my students, their families. Superintendent should retract and say it was not a safe thing to recommend.
Stay safe, be well,
Andrea Medrano
6th grade educator
Kea'au Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

MaLiA leE(& Imiola Akutagawa) <malia72@excite.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My daughter attends Molokai High School and I am the Tech Coordinator there are well...
ARE YOU KIDDING ME!!!!
you come to the school, stay ALL day, for 180 days and then you tell me that 3-feet distance is OK!!!!!
My husband, my daughter's daddy has a heart condition and is the sole caretaker of his parents (dad is a hemodialysis patient and mom is confined to a wheelchair due to a massive stroke in 1997)...so then you tell me that 3-feet distance is okay!!!
Health and safety is my #1 priority!!
aloha
malia

"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal ". ---Henry Ford

student spacing

Woody and Aviva <plaut.hawaii@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am not sure how three foot spacing is even considered a viable option. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk

. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

If you have ever spent any time with children, you would know that they spend more time socializing any time they can then any other activity in school. By its very definition , face-to-face is exactly what this means.

Picture 3 foot spacing with students facing each other talking, laughing, giggling, etc. In reality there is no social distancing at all.

Get real, be safe, and follow CDC guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,

Judah "Woody" Plaut

Konawaena Middle School

Kealakekua, HI

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tina Lopez <mrsronlopez@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

RE: Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

Aloha,

I URGE YOU TO ENFORCE A 6 FEET DISTANCING POLICY IN SCHOOLS INCLUDING THE CLASSROOM AND CAFETERIA.

Teachers, students and staff are important too.

The rule in public is 6 feet to keep everyone safe. How can we keep ourselves safe in just 3 feet?

I am a teacher at Pearl City Elementary. I also have 3 children at Waipahu High and Highlands Intermediate School. I also have a family member in the home who is at risk.

Our people are our greatest asset in Hawaii. We need to keep them safe. As the cases increase daily, putting hundreds of people (thousands on high school campuses) on a campus is not wise.

I urge you to protect our 'āina. Protect our people. Thank you for taking care of our teachers and our children.

Mahalo,
Tina Lopez
226-7749

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ramsey Calimlim <calimlim96731@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a parent to of children attending Kahuku Elementary School and Kahuku High School.
Three foot distance is NOT enough space for social distancing!! School should open with 6 foot spacing, like the rest of the public and then after the first quarter, if needed, make adjustments then. They can't just get in and stuff our children in the classrooms!!
I am worried about my high school student, where he would change to multiple classrooms with multiple teachers and of course different classmates for 6-7 periods each day.....that in itself sounds like the possibility of this virus spreading. Has the school thought of just core topics??? One to two teachers per class?? Same classmates per room/space?? Atleast for the first quarter possibly semester?? Just jumping in back to NORMAL sounds wrong at this time. Schools should highly heed caution when it goes back into session, and then adjust with changes or update the classroom/topics taught.
Virtual classes is not ideal, and yes in person teaching is important for my children but to just throw them back into class 3 feet apart, thats a big NO NO for me.
Mahalo

Testimony

Alina Gutierrez <aj.gutierrez14@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Alina Gutierrez and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Mauka Lani Elementary and my children attend Ho’okele Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I taught summer school this summer and attempted the 3 foot distance between desks with 1st graders and it was impossible to keep them from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. And this was with only 4 students in my summer class. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students.

My school says that we can fit up to 26 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. Us teachers who are in the classroom were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my children to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children’s education, but their safety is priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Alina Gutierrez

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Teri Horiuchi <horiuchimom@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Teri Horiuchi, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year"

The recent memo sent out by the Hawaii DOE allows for students to be seated 3 feet apart. I don't believe that this conforms with the CDC recommendations, nor what the Hawiai DOH has been saying, and is unsafe for students and school staff. I would like to cite the situation in Texas, where child care facilities allowed for 3 feet of distance, and resulted in an outbreak of over 300 cases of COVID-19. The University of Hawaii is requiring 6 feet of space between students. I don't understand why we would have a different requirement in pre-K-12 schools.

Another thing that I don't understand is why we are not requiring masks at all times in classrooms, when the mayor of Honolulu just came out with a requirement for masks, citing their effectiveness in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

I am both a teacher and a parent of a student at Waipahu High School. I appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Jessica McNeace <mcneacejessica@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My daughter will be attending Waialua Intermediate and High School. I am very concerned with the lack of information and overall plan for returning to school in August. I would like the principal, Mrs Alexander, to provide her return plan for the students as I have read the DOE guidelines and understand that many specific decisions are left up to the principal.
I am highly suggesting that the students desks are kept 6 feet apart in accordance with CDC guidelines. I also suggest that everyone on campus wears a mask. A staggered schedule, teachers changing classes rather than students, online classes, and lunch in the same classroom are other considerations. I would like to know if electives ,such as band, will be offered. What will the school day look like for the students and how can we help prepare them for the changes.
I realize this is an overwhelming task to revise the school system, however, you are a part of leadership in families lives and we look to you to make well educated and well thought out decisions.
Thank you,
Jessica McNeace

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Social Distancing

Lisa A <atsargirl@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

6-foot social distancing is the CDC recommended amount of space recommended for safety, as well as use of facial masks. As a teacher and older adult, I am very concerned the BOE thinks 3 feet would be "okay". This goes against all of the information we have been receiving regarding the spread of this virus and flies in the face of safety for both students and teachers. This also sends a mixed message to students about proper social distancing and important protocols that keep us all safe and have been instrumental in keeping our COVID19 numbers down in Hawaii. Additionally, many of our students come from multi-generational household, so you are potentially putting everyone in a household at risk. Please keep social distancing, and mask usage, in line with CDC recommendations to keep everyone safe.

Mahalo, Lisa Anderson
Honoka'a High and Intermediate School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Michelle Matsuzaki <mrmatsuzaki@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I believe the Department of Education’s recommendation to allow students’ desks to be as close as three feet to each other in classrooms when school resumes in August is dangerous and puts children, teachers and families at risk for Covid. As a kindergarten teacher, my 5 and 6 year olds can barely sit still in their chairs. They stand and move constantly. If they are 3 feet apart, they will lean over, stand up and even reach over to touch and talk to the child next to them. I also feel that the recommendation that masks may not be needed in the classroom further shows that 3 feet between desks is just too close for students to be. If no masks are being worn, then 6 feet should required at ALL times.

My daughter will be in 6th grade at Kaneohe Elementary. The classrooms are very small and crowded with up to 25 students and no social distancing. How is she and her classmates going to be safe if we're still trying to cram the maximum number of students in there with 3 feet distance. I won't feel safe sending her to school.

I'm just frustrated that everywhere I go, there is a 6 feet distance rule. There are rules to wear masks. There are plastic shields to protect workers. Yet, in our public schools, these rules go out the window. How can we care so little about our keiki and risk their health, along with teachers and staff just so schools can open.

I want to teach. I missed being with my children during the shutdown, but I want to make sure that I'm safe and that my students are safe. I also want to make sure my daughter returns to a safe environment as well, especially with these rules that are left to interpretation, many schools are doing the minimal possible just so they can re-open. My daughter has health issues and I'm still considering whether I feel it is safe for her to return. I also don't want to contract Covid and bring it home my family.

Please be firm and make it clear that these are the policies that need to be followed. There should be 6 feet of space between all students desks. If the health and safety is the Board's priority then please mandate these policies so that students and teachers will be in a safe environment to learn and work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle Matsuzaki
Kailua Elementary School

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

"Testimony"

thomas lee <passhappybear@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:34 AM
Reply-To: "passhappybear@yahoo.com" <passhappybear@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
My name is Thomas Lee and I am a teacher at Baldwin High School on Maui.
In regards to the latest social distancing proposal of 3 ft with students facing the same direction, I emphatically disagree.
When I heard of this backtracking idea, I did some investigating. Yes there have been some studies with this 3 feet social distancing idea. Words like "MIGHT" and "SHOULD" were the best results coming from the 3 ft studies. AND that the 6 ft social distancing recommendation was still "PREFERRED" and "BEST" as referenced by the WHO (and I don't mean the rock music group).
3 ft is great for ACT testing. Maybe for the middle seat on the airlines but it's easier to move desks and chairs in the classroom. A 3 ft radius around each student is great. By the way, a 3 foot radius around each student will still equal 6 ft away from each other.
From the start of this debilitating pandemic and all of the studying in trying to flatten the curve/prevent, 6 ft has been the # to abide by. I'm talking globally, nationally and before yesterday, locally.
This makes me irate and leads me to ask a lot of questions aimed at the leadership of this 3 ft social distance idea.
1. "6 ft is good practice and EVERYONE is familiar with that": SO why make it complex?
2. We will already be the 1st state having schools to reopen: SO are we the guinea pig for this 3 ft idea? Are we trying to be trendsetters?
3. Which distance is safer 3 ft or 6 ft?
4. Why 3 ft instead of 6 ft? I have my personal guess on this question.
It's our right to question leaders and I am invoking it. I have a challenge for our leadership.
The only way I will be ok with this 3 ft nonsense idea is 2 ways:
1. Have leadership sit in the trenches putting their money where their mouth is with us 180 days a year sitting 3 ft apart
OR
2. Put this 3 ft rule in effect for every facet of the DOE and not just the classrooms: District offices, administration, staff offices, meetings, etc.
To me, it's only fair. Live what you preach. If leadership is doing what we're doing I'll agree with a big smile on my face.
It is my hope that the safer and preferred 6 ft social distancing be reinstituted and observed.
Thank you

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Mark Jeffryes <mark.jeffryes@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I am very concerned about Superintendent Kishimoto’s announcement at the July 2nd press conference that schools will be allowed to maintain a three foot distance for social distancing of students in the classroom. This policy would be in direct contradiction of the CDC and Department of Health recommendations about what is considered safe for our students during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critically important for schools to implement a six foot distancing standard, especially in the classrooms, as it will affect every person in our state. We cannot afford the spread of illness, loss of life, and other economic fallout that this decision would portend.

I am the Elementary Computer Resource Teacher for Waikoloa Elementary School. We have determined that it makes more sense for me to deliver my instruction in individual classrooms so students don’t have to share computers. In my particular situation, a three foot distancing protocol would mean that I would be exposed to up to 120 students and 8-10 adults daily, including different students each day as I rotate between classrooms. This amount of daily exposure is potentially harmful to me and others because of the number of students I would come into contact with, and the fact that I myself am in a high risk group for contracting COVID-19.

Regrettably, I would seriously consider tending my resignation with the DOE if I estimate that my health and the health of my family are in jeopardy. Please recommend to Superintendent Kishimoto that a six-foot distancing policy must be adhered to for the safety of our children and faculty members.

Sincerely,

--
Mark Jeffryes
Elementary Computer Teacher
Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School
808--883-6808 x 260

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft?

sugiko tomori <sugiko.t@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am questioning about it is only required to be 3 ft away between the desks for the upcoming school year.
I cannot find 3 ft. on CDC guidelines and I am not sure how safe it is. Especially students will be in the classroom whole not just there for a little while.

I personally think they should be apart at least 6 ft away.

Thank you,
Sugiko Tomori

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Stacie Nakamura <snakamura117@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

Aloha Board Members,

My name is Stacie Nakamura and I serve as a 12 month district resource teacher in the area of special education. Additionally, I am a parent of a 4th grader at Waikele Elementary. As a parent and an employee of the Hawaii DOE, I urge you to mandate 6 feet of space between student desks to the fullest extent possible. Working in special education, I understand that for some students, this simply isn't possible. But shouldn't we be maximizing safety to the fullest extent possible? I wholeheartedly support returning to in person learning as I feel it is best for students. However, I also know that we're social beings and sitting next to each other 3 feet expecting students to never make the "mistake" of facing each other is nearly impossible.

I understand that space is an issue in many schools but I've provided what I think is a viable suggestion in an employee survey. My suggestion is to utilize state and district office spaces located at or next door to schools as mini computer labs or additional small group classroom space. The employees in these offices can work from home while students safely utilize the space and internet. Further, there are offices within schools used by employees such as Student Services Coordinators and Curriculum Coordinators that can also be used for this purpose.

As stated above, I fully support a safe return to school for our students. I hope that as a board, you will consider the safety of the students and the teachers who serve them by mandating 6 feet of space between student desks on school campuses.

Sincerely,
Stacie Nakamura

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kirstie Saito <kirstie.saito@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Kirstie Saito and I am a counselor at Waipahu Intermediate School.

The 6-foot social and physical distancing must be observed in our schools. Not only does that put our teachers and staff at risk, but our keiki as well. I am hoping that the 6-foot distance becomes mandated in our schools.

Kirstie Saito
Waipahu Intermediate School
Counselor
(808) 307-9040
kirstie.saito@k12.hi.us

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Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

valerie yamakawa <yamakawav@hawaii.rr.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:49 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing concerning Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Valerie Yamakawa and I teach 2nd grade at Hickam Elementary School. I am very concerned that I will have a classroom full of students face to face four days a week this coming school year. Having the desks 3 feet apart in an enclosed room, does not meet the guidelines of the CDC for schools in areas with “minimal to moderate community transmission in our area”. Doing this is reckless and dangerous. The CDC recommends the desks being at least 6 feet apart. The idea of our class being our own “bubble” does not make me feel safe at all. I don’t know where the children have been, where there parents have been and who they have been in contact with when they are not in school. I taught summer hub and had 6 students. With 6 students, I could keep their desks 6 feet apart, but it was a constant battle to get them to stay 6 feet apart. It was almost impossible with 6 students, I can’t imagine doing it with 25. I feel I would be putting myself (and my family), my students and my students’ families in danger. Furthermore, putting 25 kids plus a teacher in a classroom 4 days a week, in many classrooms, in many schools is being very irresponsible to the greater community. It is my plea that you, the BOE, mandate that all desks in all classrooms be configured in a way that they are at least 6 feet apart. Once that is established, teachers will figure out how to do school in a way that is most beneficial to their students.

Thank you,

Val Yamakawa

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

21Christa Lopez <21chrpez@waipahuh.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha To whomever it may concern,

I am testifying about discussion item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am going to be a senior at Waipahu High School. Although I would love to return to have an amazing senior year. It is very important that you, the board, mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

My mother is a teacher with the department of education and it is vital for the six feet distance to be mandated to ensure her safety. My father is at high risk for catching the Covid-19 virus. We simply can't afford for my two brothers and I to catch it and transmit it to him.

In the public, at grocery stores and restaurants we are urged to stay six feet from each other. In the classroom it is not different. Without this in the plan, there is no accountability to our safety.

Mahalo, Christa Lopez

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet distancing

acgen1@aol.com <acgen1@aol.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:03 AM
Reply-To: acgen1@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

I feel that it is vital to require a 6 ft distance in the classroom. If this is not possible, I feel that distance learning should be done. 3 feet is not an effective way to keep the health and safety of our students and teachers a priority. Teachers and families are all at risk with 3 feet distancing as students may be asymptomatic and bring the virus home to their grandparents. I also feel that temperature checks need to be put in place to enter school. Please thoughtfully consider changing your mandates. I know that our families would benefit and appreciate it as we maintain 6 feet social distancing even in stores. The same should be done in our classrooms.

Mahalo,
Shelly Kurosu
Holomua Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A)

Debra Sanbei <olih76@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
The 3 feet apart distancing in our school classroom is neglectful to teachers and students. It not only put risks to families, but our entire community. Why defy the CDC guidelines of 6 feet distancing? Would you all want this environment for your child in a public school? I would not! Until COVID19 is under control, this distancing needs rethinking in classrooms. Thank you.

Debra Sanbei
Social Studies Teacher
Grades 10-11
Hilo High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Face to face

David Lord <lord@aloha.net> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:14 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I'm definitely for face to face instruction, I feel that my grandson fell behind some without teacher interaction. This would be at Kilauea Elementary on Kauai.I
Mahalo,
SusanLord

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher testimony

Andrea James <lbdrea808@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I am a 14 years DOE teacher, who is very worried, and disappointed with the options that were given to us in regards to return to school safely. Even though I have fought to keep my job with the DOE for many years, by having multiple jobs in order to support myself financially, the "plan" for safe return to school is do discouraging and DISRESPECTFUL that I will most likely be leaving the profession in order to protect myself and my family. The DOE clearly does not have the safety and best interest of the teachers or the students in mind, and it is very disheartening. I know many teachers who struggle every year to work for the DOE, because we love our jobs and we love our students. This situation is unacceptable. It was clearly described that many teachers, students and parents voted for a virtual learning model to continue. It is clearly not safe at this time to return to school, there is not a clear plan, horrible communication to the employees and no time for planning. By expecting teachers to both teach at school in person, virtually, keep their students safe, and their OWN families, you are asking an impossible amount from teachers. For a state who has been in a teacher crisis for YEARS, this will be the tipping point and our students will be hurt the most. To even think that 3 ft separation is acceptable is an embarrassing excuse from our leadership. Maybe it will take enough teachers quitting, for people in the "offices" of the DOE to actually have to step foot on to a campus and put their own lives in danger to get some real changes. The option of virtual teaching must be given in order for teachers to feel like we are being heard or at least protected.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony (July 9)

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:30 AM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!

We are both public school teachers with over 50 years of experience between us.

This message has two points:

1. HIDOE's 3-feet distancing recommendations
2. Early assessment (i.e., diagnostic testing)

Regarding Point #1: Being 3 feet apart and all facing forward goes against the CDC guidelines ("recommends that schools space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are 'not spaced apart' as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19"). It doesn't matter which direction you face. The droplets from speaking, coughing, sneezing, etc. even with a covering can reach 3 feet all around. Please keep it at 6 feet apart (and even then, it's questionable). We also have concern for all students' well being, including our son who attends Moanalua Middle School.

Regarding Point #2: The HIDOE Return to Learn: Principal's Handbook (http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%202.pdf) mentions, starting on Page 16 ("Learning Assessments") that all schools must assess their students within the first two weeks of school.

Shouldn't the focus of opening schools be for students' and teachers' well-being (health and wellness)? What will students think when they must take a test? The focus should be on well-being, SEL, and refocusing lessons and assessment tasks **within** the learning (as well as adequate and thorough planning for distance learning). There will be learning trauma if we don't focus on welcoming students back into a safe and nurturing environment, and instead barrage them with tests. An alternative would be to do smaller assessment tasks within the learning. With altered bell schedules, teachers will probably see their students less often than usual; that time is valuable, better spent with instruction and formative tasks rather than diagnostic testing. Performance data is ***not*** the most important thing right now.

Here are some references against giving assessments at the start of the school year. Most are more focused on Mathematics, but the basic principles apply to all content areas.

- https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/teaching-supervising-assessment-beyond.pdf (Pages 14-15)
- https://mc2.nmsu.edu/files/2020/06/NCTM_NCSM_Moving_Forward.pdf (Page 7)
- https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/ (in section "Behavioral Health/Emotional Support for Children and Adolescents")
- https://achievethecore.org/page/3267/2020-21-priority-instructional-content-in-english-language-arts-literacy-and-mathematics (PDF; Pages 11-12)

- https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf (Page 7)
- https://buildingmathematicians.wordpress.com/2020/05/21/how-not-to-start-math-class-in-the-fall-2020/

We ask that you consider these issues for the sake of our students and teachers. Please empathize with them.

Mahalo,

Keith Ishihara
Math Teacher
Waipahu Intermediate School

Patricia Ishihara
HIDOE Mathematics Resource Teacher
Office of Curriculum and Instruction Design (OCID)

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot distancing/masks/COVID19 safety

Maria Tejada <afatasi17@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:39 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
I am a mother of 5 and am greatly concerned with the safety guidelines for returning to school face to face. The 3 foot desk distance is not science based. It is proven that being indoors and having more than 15 minute exposure with people COVID19 spreads. 3 foot distance is way too close and pointless. Indoor dining is one the most high risk activities right now and school will be even more high risk. While young kids are proven to do well with COVID19- teachers and staff and ohanas are at much higher risk. Also- suggesting masks is as good as nothing. Kids will not keep them on once they know they are not required- especially high school kids- due to social and peer pressure. Again, putting teachers and staff at risk. As of now the plans to go face to face look good on paper but do not account for human nature, student behaviors, and science. Distance learning should be the recommended option. Face to face should be reserved for high priority Students so that schools can offer a truly safer environment with much less students. And teachers should be given a choice. After all- when a teacher or staff gets sick it's not the DOE that's going to take care of them and their ohanas.
And I truly wonder if schools have all the necessary sanitation and disinfectant needed. And schools really should be providing PPE to all employees and students. If they cannot then distance learning is the most sensible solution.
Mahalo for your time,
Maria Tejada

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Roxi I <roxi808hi@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a retired DOE Teen Health teacher writing in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. Please do not allow the three-foot distancing as it is extremely dangerous to students, teachers and aides in the classroom.

Droplets from coughs and sneezes can travel easily and spread the coronavirus quickly. “The average uncovered sneeze sends droplets about six feet, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But for smaller-size particles, it’s more like eight feet or farther because of a gaslike cloud that keeps them airborne, according to videos of sneezes, recorded and analyzed by scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.” (Washington Post, The Big Number: 6 to 8 feet — that’s how far germs can fly after you sneeze or cough).

Please protect our keiki, teachers, faculty and staff by maintaining a distance of no less than 6 feet. This will also protect the spread to families.

Mahalo,
Roxi Iijima

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testing

Pamela Hurley <hurleygirlie66@icloud.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
As we return to our campus and class rooms, the focus must be on Social Emotional Learning SEL, circles, caring for our Keiki, buildIng relationships and being diligent with new safety protocols. To welcome our haumana back with testing is ludicrous and insensitive.
This must not be mandated!
In addition, I wholeheartedly believe that at the middle school level, rather than returning to our planned schedule of changing classes all day long and seeing 80-100 kids come into the class, we simply See only our advisory students. Small class size, around 20 and have only our advisory students for the first 6 weeks. It makes sense for our students, their families and our teachers. We will be implementing Acellus and we can have one student assigned their laptop, rather than sharing with all the students from the 6 different periods, 80-100.
These are my thoughts. This is my testimony. I am a middle school educator and I thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns.
Mahalo,
Pamela Hurley
(808)640-0284

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion item VI A

haleakalaskies@hawaiiantel.net <haleakalaskies@hawaiiantel.net> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

The Board of Education should set a 6 foot distance requirement for student desks to reduce the risk of spread of Covid 19, not the current 3 foot distance that is being proposed. I appreciate the limitations of small classrooms and large class sizes. To offset fewer desks in the classrooms a combination of distance learning and in school classroom learning should be utilized. Students who have shown they can effectively utilize distance learning should be allowed to stay home if the parents can accommodate having their children home. Students who are having difficulty with distance learning and whose parents cannot keep them home due to work or other limitations should be the ones to attend school. This will reduce class sizes hopefully by half. In addition I would like to suggest canceling Kindergarten for the next school year. 5 year olds will have a very difficult time wearing face coverings and practicing social distancing especially with the stress of starting school for the first time. Kindergarten teacher's can become first and second grade teachers to utilize their classrooms to decrease class sizes. Kindergarteners can have at home learning materials, and should be tested the following school year to see if they should repeat Kindergarten or move on to 1st grade. Alternatively a late start of Kindergarten could be utilized after a vaccine is developed.

Thank you for the consideration of these ideas,

Linda Lembeck

207 Kulamanu Circle

Kula, HI, 96790

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

KarenY. <kcyoro@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Karen Yoro and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent of two children. I am entering my 11th year as a teacher and although teach year has it’s different sets of challenges, this year is by far the most challenging, creating so much anxiety after hearing that schools are willing to open during this pandemic.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance for each other. Six desks were placed in a row with 6 feet distance that stretched from one wall to another, leaving no room for furnitures other than students desks. Desks stretched from the front of the classroom where the tv and whiteboard is to inches away from my teacher desk. It leaves concerns to not only students still not being able to keep a safe distance from each other, but also myself as a teacher and unable to clearly see the tv/board. This whole layout makes teaching ineffective and most importantly unsafe. This is not only a danger to the students, but myself as well.

My school says that we can fit up to 26 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. Us teachers who are in the classroom were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

As a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my children to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children’s education, but their safety is priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Karen Yoro
Grade 1 teacher

--
 Ali &  Nix's Mommy Sent from Gmail Mobile

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Donna-Lynne Hanlon <donna-lynne_hanlon@baldwin.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am an educator at H.P. Baldwin High School, Maui, Hawaii. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

I am urging you to reconsider your position on 3 feet spacing for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. I am at risk in two categories - age and diabetes - so am concerned that 3 feet is insufficient. In almost 15 years of teaching, I have never yet met a student that remains forward facing for an entire class period.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

"Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the 'health and safety of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness are the fundamental drivers to reopen schools,'" Rosenlee said. "This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness."

Sincerely,
Donna-Lynne Hanlon

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

New school year & e: Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 20-21 school year

Mai Monkeys <mai2monkeys@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:58 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education:

I am a parent of a public school student and I am extremely concerned about the 3-foot distancing policy. I strongly feel that a 6-foot distancing policy as recommended by the CDC should be in place. Please do not put our children, teachers, staff, kupuna, and families at risk. It also makes no sense when this all started it was stated that school can't resume unless there is 4 weeks of no cases yet y'all want to start and the cases are rising here in the state that doesn't make sense .... I can't put my family at risk of getting this disease pls reconsider your decision to keep us healthy ...

Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,
Maile Kadooka & Ohana
--
M@i2m0nk3y5

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social distancing/masks in school

Lori Nelson <lorinelson53@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I teach pre-school special education students in an inclusion setting with Headstart (Hs) co-teachers. I am 66; my Hs colleagues live with elderly relatives. We would very much appreciate the BOE supporting us in our determination to implement best practices of six feet or more distance between individuals, and continuous masking, for everyone in the room. Anything less than rigorous adherence to CDC guidelines, *especially* while re-opening while covid-19 is surging in Hawaii, makes it clear that the governor, the BOE, and the DOE are willing to chance killing teachers and keiki for the sake of economic and political expediency. We should not be reopening in-person instruction at this point in the pandemic crisis, but if you force us to do so, as seems to be the case, then please support us in implementing precautions that may allow us to live to do our jobs.

Sincerely,
Lori Jane Nelson

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

DOE Safety Guideline Concern

Chas Roque <chascroque@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

My name is Chastity and I am a mom of 3 and a teacher of 11 years. When the superintendent made an announcement of the DOE's Safety Guidelines, I was shocked. Shocked because I strongly felt that it was made and decided so carelessly. Given those guidelines, I absolutely do not feel comfortable teaching my kindergarten students and sending my own children to school. As a kindergarten teacher who has taught this summer with trying to enforce social distancing, it was very difficult. Even at 3ft apart, they were still turning around and trying to touch the other student or their table and supplies. Recess is just a whole other story and that was only with a few students on campus. A few questions I had were 1) Why is it okay for masks to NOT be worn in the classrooms when it is required to wear masks in any indoor spaces or out in public? 2) Why is it okay to be only 3ft apart from each other when the CDC guidelines clearly say 6ft? 3) Why is temperature checks not being done for the safety of our students and staff? I absolutely feel that with the amount of pressure for schools to open up in the Fall, it is being done so carelessly and at the expense of the safety and well-being of our students, teachers & staff. I strongly implore you to please mandate changes in order to keep our students, teachers and staff safe and healthy.

Mahalo,
Chastity Roque

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kwai Mei Daugherty <meidaugherty71@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My name is Kwai Daugherty. I teach first grade at Waiau Elementary in Pearl City on Oahu.

I am extremely concerned about infection, especially with yesterday's news that the virus has mutated, making the new strain more infectious. More than 300 students in daycare facilities in Texas have contracted Covid-19. In addition, yesterday's news cited 319 children under 10 with the virus in Oregon, 30 students and staff at a school in Arizona contracted Covid, and 40 principals are quarantined in Santa Clara, California, after attending an in person meeting with a positive case. It seems that in the United States we are not learning from our mistakes and continue to wait until the infection spreads before we implement best practices. Common sense is being ignored in our cities, counties, and states. Let's not let Hawaii repeat the same mistakes we see across the country. Let's learn from what is happening on the mainland right now and work on prevention using common sense. Besides 6 foot social distancing in classrooms, we should implement a policy of requiring negative Covid-19 tests to attend public school like we do with TB and immunizations. Universities, hotels, sports organizations, airports, and the travel sector is requiring this. The cost of the test is now reduced to a reasonable level with free testing clinics available for residents without insurance. Most insurance companies are covering the test. If we require students to get other immunizations and health checks like TB screening before enrolling in school, we surely can add this medical requirement to the list. In addition, we should be allowing virtual or telework options for students and faculty that are concerned about their, or their family's health like many private schools and universities are offering.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. All media on every news station and every setting uses 6 feet as a standard of implementation for social distancing.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

I echo the words by Corey Rosenlee that:

"Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the 'health and safety of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness are the fundamental drivers to reopen schools....This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness."

I know from experience with my first grade students that with only 3 feet of distance between their desks they are often talking, touching, turning around, and looking at each other. They like to share objects and pass pencils, crayons and markers even when instructed not to. With 6 feet of space between desks they would have to leave their seats to communicate with each other, pass an object, or sneeze on another student, allowing me to have more control on observing and preventing that action before it occurs. When you add their chairs and space for their bodies, 3 feet of distance is a full and packed room without hardly any additional spacing between desks than we currently implement when they are facing forward. This will not help stop the spread of the virus, especially if a 6 year old student sneezes or coughs onto the person in front of him or her. Last year, several respiratory illnesses spread throughout my classroom from October on to the end of the year. I contracted several viruses that went through my classroom.

Rapa Nui, or Easter Island, just had a celebration commemorating their 100th day without a case of Covid-19. While their Polynesian community relies on hotels and tourism for 80 percent of their jobs they have decided to keep their hotels closed and open their schools instead, despite residents being out of work. Residents say they will go back to teaching their children skills in agriculture and fisheries and focus on their children's educational experience rather than risk exposing their island community to Covid-19 after they have worked so hard to eradicate it from their island. Let's take the lead from their example, and others across

the world, and do what's right for our community by following common sense and best practices that have already been proven and documented with research. We have no excuse for following down the road that has been taken in California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida - 3 of which have tourist economies, beaches, and are travel destinations like our state. I am embarrassed to repeat their mistakes when we all know what will happen and it is preventable. These states are now having to close schools again or postpone opening after a few short weeks. I oppose opening the tourist economy at the same time we open schools, however, if we are going to do it we should make it as safe as possible.

Thank you for listening to my testimony and I hope you make the best choices for our teachers, staff, and keiki.

Sincerely,

Kwai Daugherty

(808) 425-6818

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jaxon Doi <jaxon.doi@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Jaxon Doi, and I am a teacher and Social Studies Department Head at Waipahu High School.

The Superintendent's recent suggestion that 3-foot spacing for school children is outrageous and displays an alarming ignorance of guidelines put forth by the CDC and other major scientific and medical authorities. While I understand that many people are anxious to reopen schools, we must do so cautiously and in a manner that maximizes the safety of all students, families, and faculty.

Putting students just 3 feet apart, rather than the 6 feet recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, places our keiki directly at risk for high-volume transmission of the novel coronavirus. This also puts entire families and school faculties at risk, due to their frequent contact with students. I'm quite sure that the superintendent would not want to be held responsible if schools became outbreak centers as a result.

I urge you to retract this statement and recommend a minimum 6-foot spacing. This is for the safety and wellbeing of our keiki, school faculty, and all of Hawaii.

Thank you,

Jaxon Doi, M.Ed.
Teacher / Social Studies Department Head
Waipahu High School
jaxon.doi@k12.hi.us

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

David Negaard <draagen@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:22 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Aloha Esteemed Board,

I am David Negaard. I teach at Henry Perrine Baldwin High School on Maui.

I have taught for 22 years. I love what I do and I love my students. I missed them terribly during the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year, and I look forward to what the new school year has to offer. I am not, however, eager to risk the health and well being of my students, my colleagues, or myself (or any of our family and close associates).

I want you to know my concerns regarding the Hawai'i Department of Education's decision to allow student desks to be as close as 3 feet apart "as long as students are facing forward" after negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hawai'i State Teachers Association that includes language that "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Teachers and parents alike know that schools are centers of contagion. Seasonal flu and cold are transmitted and retransmitted among schoolchildren and staff. With a more dangerous contagion in the air, we cannot afford to take for granted our safety standards.

First, there is no reasonable hope that students will remain facing forward, which is the DoE expectation that justifies 3 foot spacing. Even in high school, where students have begun to develop real self-regulation skills, students will, as a matter of habit and on a frequent basis, turn to address the students on either side or those behind. In the lower grades, students lack self-regulation sufficient to even hope they will face forward.

Second, the 3 foot spacing the DoE specifies flies in the face of what they agreed to during impact bargaining with HSTA. Did the DoE bargain in bad faith? Or are they assessing feasibility based on how to return students to classrooms without regard for the health and safety of them or their teachers?

Absent written Hawai'i Department of Health guidance to the contrary, it is reckless to establish conditions less conservative than those published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which "recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk."

Together with many of my colleagues, I am of an age that increases my risk should I contract COVID-19. Also with many of my colleagues, I have pre-existing health conditions that further increase my risk. As much as I want to be in my classroom with my students, I want them, my colleagues, and myself to be safe.

It is also important to me that both my union and the employer act with integrity and good faith. That which has been negotiated must be honored by both the DoE and members of Bargaining Unit 05. Our students pay better attention than many adults believe, and if the institutions with which they are most engaged in this season of their lives demonstrate anything other than the utmost integrity, well...that will be a profound lesson for them.

Mahalo,
--
David Negaard
cell: (808) 214-8919
"Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play." -Heraclitus

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Coralyn Sunico <coralynsunico@farringtonhighschool.org> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:24 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am emailing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Coralyn Sunico, and I teach 9th grade English at Farrington High School.

Given that the schools have been meeting to discuss the different models for reopening schools, it would be in our best interest to continue following CDC recommendations of social distancing of at least six feet, no less, to reduce risk. To allow a minimum of three feet separation creates confusion and fear among the staff and students, and we have had enough emotional stress during these rough few months.

If you would like for everyone to resume school, please make our safety and health a priority. We need to assure families that their keiki are safe and that teachers can return home safely to their families without possibly bringing back a virus that could have been prevented by following appropriate safety measures. If restaurants and stores and public transportation can do their kuleana by following CDC recommendations for the sake of our community, why can't we?

E mālama pono ʻoe iā ʻoe a me iā mākou,

Coralyn
--
Coralyn Sunico
ELA Teacher
C/O 2022 Co-Advisor
Farrington High School
(808) 305 - 5180

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Erin Noel <eahnoel@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Erin Noel and I work at Kanuikapono Public Charter School in Anahola, HI on the island of Kauai.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

It is absolutely unacceptable to plan for 3 feet spacing between students when the CDC recommendation is 6 feet minimum. The HSTA MOU was agreed upon for the safety of students, staff, and all of our families. Going against the CDC guidelines goes against our health and safety.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Erin Noel

Testimony

Donna D <donnadesq@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My name is Donna Daum and I am a 5th/6th grade teacher at Alakai O Kauai Charter School on Kauai.

My children will attend either Alakai or Koloa elementary school.

If you are not an educator, you do not know what really happens in a classroom.

Allowing 3 feet distance instead of 6 feet will allow more students in the room at one time.

These are CHILDREN, children that probably do not understand the danger and risk presented if this virus spreads.

They will move around, they will touch everything. They will put everyone at risk, if the virus is present.

This is a danger to teachers, children, parents and grandparents, everyone.

To provide any distance within a classroom, and not provide the CDC recommendation, which is 6 feet, is negligent.

Please do not open that floodgate, as we are welcoming back tourists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donna Daum

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Leina Yamaguchi <leina.yamaguchi@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To BOE members:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Leina Yamaguchi and I have been a teacher at James Campbell High School for over 20 years.

I do not agree with Superintendent Kishimoto's stance that classrooms can maintain 3 foot distancing of desks if students all face the same way. Isn't the State of Hawaii supposed to follow the guidelines provided by the CDC who states: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Furthermore, I am appalled that the BOE will not require students to use face coverings/masks while in the classroom. How can the BOE disregard our State and City mandates for face coverings/masks to be used in all public places?

Schools should be a safe place for all. We must abide by all preventative social distancing measures to keep our students, faculty and families safe.

Thank you.

--
Leina Yamaguchi
Special Education Transition Coordinator
James Campbell High School
(808) 305-3703

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Testimony

Jennifer <jenniferleeburley@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education,

I am a kindergarten public school teacher and a mother of a 4th grader. I implore you to require 6 feet of social distancing between everyone on school campuses. The 6 feet rule is a BEST PRACTICE recommended by the CDC during this pandemic. Let's not settle for anything less.

The 3 feet rule put out by the DOE is based on the assumption that students will not be facing each other, but rather, facing forward. With over 20 years of teaching experience, I know for a fact that no one can prevent students from turning to talk to a neighbor. Nor should we. It is imperative for students to discuss ideas and to have collaborative conversations. With the 3 feet model we are preventing those valuable conversations from occurring.

Regardless of your decision, I plan to set up my room for 6 feet of social distancing because the health and safety of my students come first.

But what about my daughter? What about *your* sons and daughters? Would you feel confident leaving your child in a class with only 3 feet of social distancing?

Please do the right thing. Make the health and safety of those you are entrusted with your top priority. The future of Hawaii hinges on the decisions you make now. Fight for our keiki!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Taira
Kanoelani Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

doreen del rosario <doreen_delrosario4@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:41 AM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@BOE.HAWAII.GOV" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 20-21 school year

Dear Board of Education:

I am a parent of a public school student and I am extremely concerned about the 3-foot distancing policy. I strongly feel that a 6-foot distancing policy as recommended by the CDC should be in place. Please do not put our children, teachers, staff, kupuna, and families at risk.

Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,
Doreen Del Rosario
Waialua Elementary
Waialua High and Intermediate

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Pamela Garvey <pajgar@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:48 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I'm testifying on discussion item VI(A):Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021- school year.
HSTA and BOE agreed upon terms such as students being at least 6 feet apart and that all students and teachers should wear masks. As a teacher, I'm asking that for the health of students and teachers --that the agreement be honored. News stations informed the public yesterday that the Superintendent decided 3 ft. of space and no mask will be the expectation in school classrooms. The news reporter went on to say that if students are outside they should wear masks but not in the classroom. This is not science based or health based. This puts the lives of teachers and students at risk. The mayor himself just announced that everyone has to wear a mask inside buildings. I don't think the mayor meant to exclude children and teachers. How could the DOE decide that teachers lives and students lives are less important than others in the state by ignoring the scientifically based recommendation of 6 ft. and to wear a mask. It appears the 3ft. space decision was made so that more children can fit in a classroom? But that goes against the purpose of 6 ft. spacing--to reduce the possibility of transmission. The DOE has also reasoned that if students are facing forward at 3 ft. apart with no mask on they will have little possibility of transmission. This makes no scientific sense. Kids turn in their seats frequently. Most importantly, someone in the DOE decided that droplets will not spread in all directions to other kids at 3 ft. and with no mask? This is nonsensical and not based on science. I was appalled when I heard on the news that no mask would be required of anyone in class. This puts all of us in a classroom at an unnecessary risk. I was hoping that it was inaccurate reporting, but it does not seem so. We, as teachers, are very worried about the situation and need reassurance from the BOE. I implore you to reinstate what was earlier agreed upon----6 ft. of distancing and everyone required to wear a mask in the classrooms.

Sincerely,
Pamela Garvey
Teacher at Ben Parker School in Kaneohe

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Janell Tanabe <jtanabe@kokohead.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I do not agree with the Superintent's view on social distancing for desk which she states 3ft is acceptable for students. The reason is all social distancing protocols are based on 6ft being minimal effective distancing. Masks should be kept on all day except for eating. Please help our students, faculty/staff, and our community to be safe and not have another shutdown of schools.

Thank you,
Janell Tanabe
Tech. Coord.
Koko Head School
189 Lunalilo Home Road
Honolulu, HI 96825
Work: (808)397-5811 ext.232
Fax: (808)397-5816

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

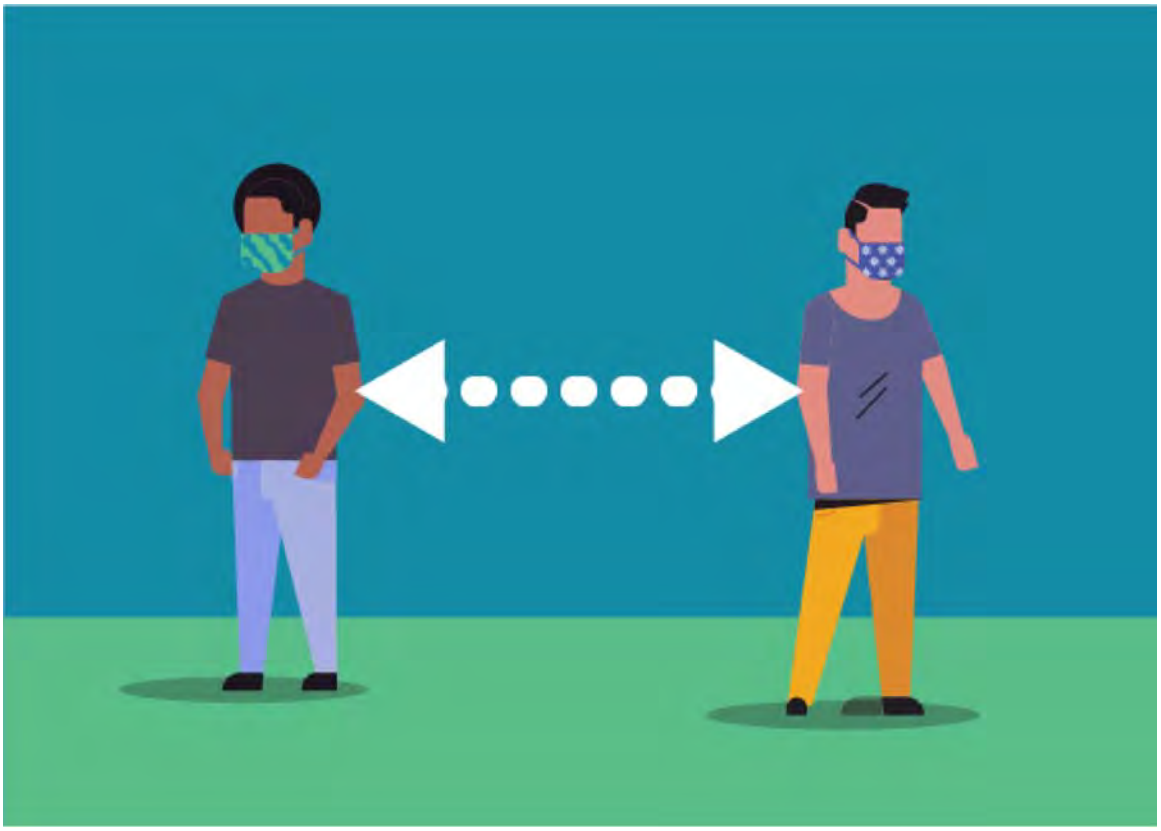
Hotmail <snpkauai@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. It has come to my attention that the board of education is allowing desks to be 3' apart. This is unacceptable and sadly shocking to learn that the board is not taking guidance from health officials. I have three children in three different public schools, am a public school special education teacher and very concerned about the safety of my students, my children, my family, and myself. You are putting a large population at risk. I ask you to please make smart decisions with human health and safety your number one priority. ALL schools must be mandated to follow the strictest recommended rules. Please do not be vague in your language. I strongly oppose 3' desk distancing as well as vague language such as "should" or "may". Please don't write policies open to interpretation when clear logical guidelines are available.

The below information is taken directly from our very own CDC.GOV website. Please READ and use this CLEAR guidance when making decisions that will affect our community. Why are you ignoring the recommended 6 feet? As educators why would you ignore research and science? This isn't made up but 3 feet being safe is. Where is your research & evidence behind this 3 foot decision?

What is social distancing?



Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home.
To practice social or physical distancing stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.
In addition to everyday steps to prevent COVID-19, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread locally and across the country and world.
Limit close contact with others outside your household in indoor and outdoor spaces. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you—or they—have no symptoms. Social distancing is especially important for people who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

About COVID-19

- Coronavirus disease is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching

their own mouth, nose, or eyes. For more information go to CDC's Fact Sheet- What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)pdf icon
.

- Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19, such as healthcare workers, direct support providers, and household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Mahalo for taking my testimony into consideration,
Shaunna
Kaua'i

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Fall 2020 Restrictions

Austin Ames <aames07@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:04 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on department of educations comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 school year.
It deeply worries me about the new information that is coming out indicating what steps the Board of Education are planning on taking this fall for the upcoming school year. There are obvious issues with your plan that you either seem to be ignoring or outright refusing to address which puts the community at risk. The CDC is currently promoting a 6 foot distance between individuals because of scientific reasoning. It is not an arbitrary number that they've decided on for no reason. To then make that 3ft an acceptable distance between students with no evidence to justify the reasoning is unconscionable. You are not only putting the students and teachers at risk, but also their families and the community at large. If you at the Board of Education are teleconferencing and maintaining social distancing because of the on-going pandemic, then why on Earth are you asking students and teachers to follow a different set of rules? If you're not meeting in person for fear of possibly spreading the virus then shame on you for expecting children and teachers to be put in harm's way. You're asking for community spread of this virus based off the "guidelines" for reopening the schools this year. I will be the first to promote the education of the keiki here on the islands and value the importance of education, however your current model lacks common sense and forward thinking during this pandemic. Not allowing or accommodating for teachers and students to safely practice social distancing during a global pandemic is utterly ridiculous and shortsighted. You closed the schools and practiced distant learning when the cases were just starting to ramp up in April which was admirable and applaudable. What have you done for the past 3 months to anticipate that this could be a prolonged issue for the fall? The answer seems to be, very little. You clearly haven't anticipated the fact that teachers close to retirement may choose to leave the schools now instead of a couple years down the road for health concerns. Teachers that have underlying health conditions are having to decide between going back to work or possibly contracting a deadly disease. Teachers that have significant others that can allow them to stay home may never go back to teaching because of your current plans. Last time I checked Hawaii already had a shortage of teachers and now you are possibly pushing more teachers out the door. The pay sucks and the support is almost non-existent which means most teachers teach because they care and they value education. Your actions show a lack of leadership and a severe lack of common sense. I hope that you consider revising your plans and coming up with a model where all students and teachers can social distance while maintaining a conducive environment for learning.

Sincerely,
Concerned Citizen

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sarah Smorol <sarahsmorol@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”
Good Morning.
I am concerned that a three feet socially distanced classroom does not become safe just because we don't feel we have other options.
3ft is not 6 ft- period.
Observing what is happening around the country it seems clear that we would be taking an enormous and unwarranted risk to make this choice. 6ft is 6 ft because experts have determined that this is the distance required to slow the spread of Covid-19. Anything less than 6 feet is wishful thinking, born of desperation, and has potentially devastating consequences.
Thank you for hearing my testimony today,
Sarah

--
Sarah Smorol

Every Accomplishment starts with the decision to try- Gail Devers

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 ft apart

tammy holt <tammy8707@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

It is worrisome when your recommendations of a 3 ft. Distance between students comes to us unfounded and without a source.

As a teacher I am requesting accountability and honesty from you.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Joy Cauble <jcauble2002@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,
I am a teacher at Aiea High School. I am over 60 years old and I also have a compromised immune system because of a respiratory condition. I could obtain a doctor's note to be excused from teaching in person. However, I do not want to. I believe I could teach effectively by following the 6 foot social distancing guideline and having students wear masks. However, I am very uncomfortable with the idea of 3 foot distancing and no masks required. I am soul searching whether I should risk my life under these conditions.

I ask that the BOE require the DOE to follow the MOU recently negotiated with teachers, and the CDC/DOH requirements as they are updated in accordance with medical expertise.

Mahalo,
Joy Cauble

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - 3ft Social Distancing

Renee Goff <goffren@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha to whom it concerns,

As an kindergarten educator in one of Hawai'i's schools I am against the leniency of implementing a 3ft or modified social distancing in the classroom. My students will not be sitting forward in one place for six hours, nor do I want to enforce that.

In putting our keiki first remember they are just that keiki whether they are 3 or our high school seniors. They need and will be moving and to inhibit and prohibit is detrimental. I know the CDC gives recommendations, I would like us to use it as safety implemented as best possible in class.

Here's some strong language but I think it's relevant. By choosing to open our schools during the pandemic it is feels like you are contributing to white supremacy's capitalism and the school to prison pipeline reality. I believe our policies strive to provide equity to all. I know the beauty of public education is access to all our keiki but do not implement it as knowing possible deaths of our community (students and teachers) are a possibility.

HSTA's presidential, Corey Roselee said, "The teachers HSTA fully understand the benefit of schooling. That is why we became teachers. .... Teachers are not sacrificial lambs in the desire to open our schools."

I am in agreement with this thought, do not act and later "opps, sorry." give condolences to our families as you shut down schools over our students and our coming down and dying from COVID. To have the ability to consider exposure of our community is a privilege, use that privilege to advocate and act better.

I know our funds have been cut and I encourage your collaboration to continue with the Capitol in using the CARE funds available to Hawai'i .

Much mahalos,
Renée Goff

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Melissa Hayashi <melhayashi3@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:13 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Melissa Hayashi and I am a 4th grade teacher at Nanakuli Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I do not think it is safe for students to be seated just 3 feet apart from each other in the classroom and believe it would be best to keep a distance of 6 feet. Even if their desks are facing forward, students are constantly turning their bodies and their heads in every direction and could spray droplets on their classmates when they do so. Returning to school is already going to be full of risks and challenges. This increases the risk of exposure unnecessarily.

In addition to being concerned for the safety of my students, I worry for the safety of my family as well. I am a parent of a two year old and am pregnant with another child. I want to minimize the chance of contracting the virus and passing it to my young children. I hope the BOE will make a decision that will help to keep our teachers, staff, and students as safe as possible.

Thank you for your time.

-Melissa Hayashi

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot distancing

Celia Frost <celiafrost@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The concept of 3-foot distancing as long as students are all facing the same way is for robots, not for K-12 students. No student is going to rigidly stay facing forward - that is a ridiculous assumption. In addition to being an unrealistic expectation in classrooms where pro-social skills are taught alongside academic skills, facing forward, looking only at the teacher, is an outmoded, non-student centered model of teaching where the teacher is the only person to speak.

Hawaii has been successfully managing this crisis thus far - let's not blow it by crowding classrooms!

Celia Frost, classroom teacher
Pa'auilo School

Testimony

Eric Shaffer <eshaffer@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:17 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

July 3, 2020

To the Hawai‘i Board of Education:

Aloha. I am providing testimony for **Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”**

I am a Professor of English at Honolulu Community College, and my wife is a kindergarten teacher at Lanakila Elementary School.

I join HSTA in rejecting the use of a 3-foot physical distancing rule in Hawai‘i classrooms, which appears to be in violation of the recent MOU. This 3-foot physical distancing rule in Hawai‘i classrooms is not acceptable for the health and safety of our keiki, parents, teachers, and community. In fact, this plan is dangerous and likely to end in death, amplification of the pandemic, and tragedy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website provide this advice: “**To practice social or physical distancing stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people**” (CDC bold) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>. On the same page, the writers add, “Limit close contact with others outside your household in indoor and outdoor spaces.”

Please note that a mere 3-foot distance between children from as many as twenty-five households in the enclosed space of a classroom is obviously in direct violation of these recommendations, in their letter and in their intent.

The CDC also has good advice for you in “Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs”; I suggest you consult this document and review the advice carefully: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>.

Even the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Health Disease Outbreak Control Division website, introducing the brand-new “Traveler Health Form,” under “Ensuring Public Health and Safety,” states, “Best practices in public health and epidemiology have been vitally important to safeguard Hawai‘i from the further spread of COVID-19. Through everyone’s **cooperation with practicing physical distancing** and complying with other safeguards, Hawai‘i has achieved encouraging outcomes to date. We must continue to balance economic recovery with public health and safety” (My bold) <https://health.hawaii.gov/travel/traveler-health-form/>.

Not only am I sure that recommendations from the CDC are more effectively researched and announced with better authority than the proclamations of the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Health, I am fairly certain that the pressure to “re-open” schools is in no way more important than the health and safety of our keiki.

I hear all the time from parents, school administrators, politicians, and sales-people of every sort that our keiki are our future. If we actually believe that, as individuals and as a culture, then ensuring their safety, no matter how difficult that might be should be our primary goal. No explanations can circumvent that. No excuses can justify the failure to do that. I want children to grow into the futures they deserve. If you--yes, **you**--feel the same way, then the time to do the right thing is now.

We must stop the spread of this virus in every way that we can. And stopping the virus means limiting contact between everyone in our community.

Gathering children in school classrooms defeats that purpose.

Let me point out that not only are children attending school are bringing a possible infection to their 24 classmates, but those classmates will take that possible infection to 24 households, which usually contain at least two people, and in Hawai‘i, can contain entire generations of relatives under one roof. Are all of these possible infections worth the risk?

In addition, teachers themselves will be exposed daily to 25 more opportunities to contract the infection or to bring the infection to their classrooms. Their families also will re-exposed every time a teacher returns home from school. I should not have to mention this, but when teachers fall ill with COVID-19, who will replace them in the classroom? And if teachers die, who will replace them in the coming years?

Think deeply for just one moment about this: if even one child dies because schools were re-opened with a 3-foot physical-distancing rule, can you personally--yes, I mean **you**--live with that death? Are you ready to accept personal and permanent responsibility for that death? Will you be willing to visit the parents of that child in their grief and tell them that these actions are the best you could do? How likely are you to add the statement to your résumé that during the pandemic only one student died after attending class?

These questions are not lightly posed or easily answered, and yet you are asking teachers, thousands of them, to do this. That is unconscionable. So if you--yes, **you**--are ready to allow teachers to shoulder this burden, then I invite you--yes, **you**--to take over a classroom of your own for academic year 2020-2021. You can personally see the faces of the children you’ve endangered every day, attempt to maintain a three-foot distance between them, and--let’s not forget--teach them the expected curriculum during a pandemic. If you are unwilling to do that, how can you ask teachers, whose main motivation for teaching in the first place is the success and thriving of their students, to do that?

As a professor at Honolulu Community College, I’ve been offered and accepted the option to teach all my courses remotely in Fall 2020, via Zoom or some other web modality. Everyone in the UH system has the same opportunity (depending on the subject of study), and I believe the same should be provided for our K-12 teachers. The safety of students and instructors is thereby assured, and learning will progress. Of course, with instructors like me, and many others, who have rarely or never taught remotely before, quality of instruction may be reduced; however, with enough dedication from students and instructors, that quality can be maximized, and more important, the quarantine against a virus for which there is neither cure nor vaccine will be maintained. We need to make this effort to save the lives of the ones we love and teach and support.

I urge every one--and yes, **you**--to reject this arbitrary 3-foot distancing rule, institute at least a 6-foot distancing rule, and consider closing schools altogether (again) when the new and current spike in COVID-19 cases reaches and passes beyond the spike from earlier in 2020.

Take care. Stay safe. Be well.

Best,

Dr. Eric Paul Shaffer, Professor
Honolulu Community College

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ames, Nicole <nicole.ames@kalakauamiddle.org> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My name is Nicole Ames and I am a teacher at King David Kalakaua Middle School in Kalihi.

I am deeply concerned about the plan that the BOE has put forth in regards to the reopening of schools in August, especially Superintendent Kishimoto's statement yesterday stating that student seats could be 3 ft apart as long as they are facing forward. According to the MOU HSTA has with the DOE, it was agreed that students should maintain a distance of 6 ft apart, which is based on guidelines put forth by the CDC. However, the state has now come up 3 ft, a number which is arbitrarily made and does not follow any scientific evidence. This not only puts students and teachers at risk, but the community at large.

As a teacher, I will be the first to say that education is important and essential for our children in the islands. However, the rushed plan to bring students back to school in the middle of a pandemic lacks common sense and forethought. If students and teachers are not made to feel safe in this dire time, there will be severe consequences for the education system of Hawaii. We are already in a teacher shortage, and things look to be about to get worse.

Personally, I know many teachers who are at risk or close to retirement who, despite their passion for teaching, are considering leaving the profession due to the lack of health safety they feel they will have in the coming months. As a pregnant woman myself (the CDC very recently added pregnant women to the high risk category, saying that they are at increased risk for manifestations of severe illness due to COVID-19, such as intensive care unit admission and mechanical ventilation- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology) I am considering not returning this year due to fears for my health and the risk of contracting/transmitting COVID-19 to my elderly family members that I live with.

Other teachers with working spouses that can afford to be a stay-at-home parent might make the choice to do so. In any of these cases, we are facing a potentially severe loss of teachers due to the lack of consideration the BOE is displaying toward the health and safety of its students and staff. This will devastate the teaching workforce for years to come, so I urge you to reconsider the guidelines for returning to school so that students and teachers can safely social distance while maintaining a healthy and productive learning environment.

Sincerely,
Nicole Ames

--
Nicole Ames
7th ELA/Advanced ELA
King David Kalakaua Middle School

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Erin Kowalick <inspiration47@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Erin Kowalick and I am writing in testimony on discussion item VI(A). I have been an elementary school teacher at Kihei Elementary School for the past 14 years. After signing a legal agreement between HSTA and the DOE, superintendent Kishimoto went on a press conference to say that 3 feet between student desks is sufficient if students are facing forward. This is after she signed the agreement, stating schools will do whatever they can to minimize the spread of Covid 19 by ensuring social distancing of at least 6 feet or 2 arms length, whichever is greater. This is severely disheartening that she is now going to the media and backtracking on the agreements made with the teachers. There is no way you can expect, especially young children, to be able to stay seated, facing forward for long periods of time, (all day), especially now that masks are not required. The combination of improper social distancing and the lack of required mask wearing is irresponsible. This "ohana bubble" phrase that is being thrown around to tout the safety of teachers and students is ridiculous. The bubble only exists at school. As soon as kids leave the classroom the bubble has burst as they are mixing with other family members and friends. This virus has no boundaries.

Teachers are working harder than ever to make sure our students are getting what they need and it is not right to force them back into a situation that according to even the CDC, would be high risk. Teachers are sick and tired of bearing the weight of a broken system and to disregard the health and safety of teachers, students and families in the midst of a worldwide crisis is unfathomable. When your principal is delivering the news to your staff fighting back tears, that the DOE is not requiring 6 foot distancing, you have a huge problem on your hands. Principals are afraid they will be sued if students get sick and bring it home to families. The weight being put on the shoulders of administration and teachers is unbearable and unfair.

We are already faced with a very different school year as it is. Mandating 6 feet will ensure the health and safety of our entire community and allow families and teachers to return to school feeling safe and cared for instead of a bunch of sacrificial lambs. We are in the middle of a global health crisis. Business as usual is out the door. We are all sacrificing greatly for the better of our community, but sacrificing health and safety, vs. having a job, should not be something we need to choose. A bigger problem with ensue if this is not taken care of as many teachers will leave, either through early retirement or otherwise. You will end up not having enough educators to open the doors at some schools and we already are fighting an over 1000 teacher shortage as it is. The other real possibility is having to shut back down completely because we did not handle the reopening property, which is something no one wants. Please do the right thing and tell the DOE to mandate 6 foot social distancing rules within classrooms. It's the least we can do to show our teachers we support them and care about their well being.

Sincerely,

Erin Kowalick
Kihei Elementary School. Maui, HI
-
Everyday is a gift....That's why they call it the present.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Sarah Davis <sarahdavis09@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

My name is Sarah Davis. I am 5th grade teacher at Kapaa Elementary. I writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. First off, the COVID-19 cases are not going down and Kauai just had cases blow up in the past week! I cannot see myself in my classroom with 24 at 3ft apart. CDC recommends at least 6. It makes me so scared to the point that I want to cry and I’m thinking that I will resign if there is a case at my school. Teachers should feel safe! I’m telling you now, I don’t feel safe with the plan. I would feel safer if the classes were smaller or if we could do some kind of rotation. I’m not even thirty yet and now I have the fear of dying due to the COVID-19 and it doesn’t help that my job isn’t supporting me. I want to start my family soon but it’s sad I may have to put it on gold because my money will have to go to medical bills if I get the COVID and need more medical attention. PLEASE change this plan. I do not want myself or my students to get sick just because we couldn’t stay 6ft apart. Plus tho I of the students—where they come from—then where their parents went and WHO KNOWS who has the virus?! Sticking teachers back in the classroom with 24 Students (who’s attention span isn’t that long) And having to stay put?! Think of the harm and the disengagement this will put on students and teachers. I honestly do not want to go back at this point. And i will not have a problem staying home on the first day of school if changes are not place to secure teachers’ and students‘ health.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Dayna Fukushima <daynalynn1021@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Dayna Gemeno and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Kipapa Elementary and my children attend Kipapa Elementary and Mililani Middle School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the 3 feet distancing in the classroom setting. Why do we maintain 6 feet of distance everywhere in a public setting, but not in a classroom setting? I am a preschool special education teacher and ensuring everyone's health and safety would be manageable if children are not at arms length from each other as they have difficulty staying seating for a period of time and keeping their hands to themselves.

I strongly believe that schools and teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers for temperature checks for our students upon their arrival at school. Most of my students are non-verbal and are unable to communicate how they're feeling or if they are sick. I am not a health professional and I don't know what symptoms to look for if someone is sick. Having a sick student in the classroom for a period of time before they show physical symptoms is putting everyone at risk.

As a parent, I am concerned that students and staff are not required to wear a mask, especially if 3 feet of social distancing is acceptable in the school setting. My students are constantly sneezing, spraying, and coughing without covering their mouths. They also need help wiping their noses as it drips down their face or they wipe it with the back of their hands. I can recall the numerous amount of times I was sneezed and coughed on just this past school year from my students. With that being said, I am very concerned about the health and safety of my students, children, myself and my family as my mother in-law is in remission from uterine cancer. I am excited about returning back into the classroom to see my students as distance learning was difficult for most of my students. I am willing to go back into the classroom, but there has to be a safe system in place following the CDC guidelines to protect our students, children, staff, and families.

Sincerely,
Dayna Gemeno

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony item IV A

Katie Hillstead <khillste@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Katie Hillstead. I am a BU5 member at Waianae Elementary school.

I am submitting testimony on Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I am in favor of the 3 ft face to back /side by side social distancing. For my school community, it means more students attending in person learning. As hard as the teachers worked to provide 2 hours of online instruction daily during school closures, students and families did not attend sessions regularly. For example, we have 50 fifth graders and only 7 were able to access online instruction regularly.

I firmly believe distance learning will result in generational damage for disadvantaged communities in the near future.

I ask that you please keep this definition of social distancing to include 3 ft face to back.

Thank you,
Katie Hillstead
Waianae elementary school

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kim Kaili <kim.kaili@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I have two children, one will be a senior at Kaiser , and one will be a freshman at Kalani this coming school year.
I have just read your article about having the school desks three feet apart and “trying” to implement social distancing as much as possible. Which pretty much says to me that this will not happen.
I think you are being very irresponsible in allowing schools to reopen or even considering it. This virus is no joke! The lasting side effects are serious! The percentage of asymptomatic people is approximately 40%. Testing also shows that there is a 20% false negative rate according to John Hopkins. We need to protect our children, families, teachers , and just the whole population as a whole.
I will be willing to do virtual school, there is no way I will be sending my kids to school. There is no way the school system will be able to keep everything properly sanitized and also follow through with having the children keep socially distant and have them wear their masks at all times.
Do the responsible thing and keep school closed. Thank you for your time,
Kim Kaili

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft. spacing testimony

Kev <kabumpo@earthlink.net> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:48 AM
Reply-To: Kev <kabumpo@earthlink.net>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not gamble with our lives. A 3ft. spacing between students is a violation of CDC recommendations as well as the agreement that was reached with HSTA. Thank you for your time and for not killing us.
Sincerely,
Kevin Carr
Kaimuki High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Alison Arista <ali.arista@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:52 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My children attend Aina Haina Elementary School and Niu Valley Middle School.

The idea of student desks being 3-feet apart is ridiculous and increases the risk of Covid transmission putting the students and staff at increased risk for contracting it. This is DANGEROUS. Even grown adults cannot follow social distancing rules and healthy individuals can still contract the virus. 3-foot distancing of desks for CHILDREN is absolutely ridiculous and will assist the spread of Covid throughout the students, staff, their families, the islands.

This virus should not be taken lightly. Covid can kill at best and leave life long damage and suffering to it's victims that survive. It is not worth lax mandates.

6 feet apart should be the absolute MINIMUM, and even this distance is piddly when considering the students and all lives involved.

Ali Arista
Parent

I am writing this letter in regards to the recent HSTA agreement for SY 2020-2021 that is coinciding with Governor Ige's decision to re-open Hawaii for tourism. Coronavirus cases continue to skyrocket on the U.S. mainland and it's very apparent the virus is not under control. As a public school teacher at the 2nd largest high school in the state, I am extremely concerned that teachers and students are being thrown back into the classroom in the midst of the state reopening. Governor Ige has also neglected to clarify any details in regards to how this reopening will actually be managed and enforced with fidelity.

To add to this anxiety, the DOE is now only mandating a space of 3 FEET between students despite the fact that public recommendations have consistently been a minimum of 6 feet! Why is 6 feet required in every other public space except for a school?! Even worse, students are not expected to wear masks while being contained in a small classroom having close conversations. This goes against every piece of public health advice we have been given during the pandemic. It's absolutely ludicrous to expect students to face forward for an entire class and not turn their heads left or right to talk. It doesn't matter which direction desks are facing because people naturally move around- especially kids squirming in a hot classroom! This is a completely unacceptable way to "safely" open our schools back up. Think of the message that's being sent to students and teachers in terms of how much education is valued. We already have a critical teacher shortage in Hawaii. My colleagues and I are terrified of being forced to work under such unsafe and poorly structured conditions. Furthermore, how do you think this will in turn impact the QUALITY of education being provided if teachers are scared to come to work and talk or interact with kids?! I implore the Hawaii BOE to provide teachers and students with a safe learning environment that actually meets adequate public health guidelines.

9th Grade English Teacher
MEdT, NBCT

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Safety for all

rexann dubiel <dubieldesign@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:54 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please...6 feet apart is safe.
3 feet apart is dangerous in so many ways.
As a 72-year old third grade teacher, three feet apart is
too close. It puts my life in jeopardy and all the grandparents who look after their grandchildren. The children's lives are at risk, too.
Thank you.
Rexann Dubiel Shanahan
Sunset Beach Elem.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

w3 gm <wainani3@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:02 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

Student desks need to be 6 feet apart. Don’t contradict CDC guidelines for the sake of convenience.

Thank you!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Keri Haitsuka <khaitsuka@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening school plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to ask that you give some serious thought to changing your policy of allowing 3-foot distances in the classroom to 6-foot distances, which adheres to the CDC recommendation and to the agreement made with HSTA.

As a 5th grade teacher at He'eia Elementary School, a mother of two young children, and the primary caretaker of my elderly father who resides with me, the 3-foot distance you are allowing frightens me to say the least. Since March, my family and I have been social distancing at home. My husband and I will shop for essentials wearing face masks, staying 6 feet away from others, and sanitizing before entering our house. My children rarely leave our property other than going to an empty park for a bike ride or to run around. We are grateful for video conferencing as we do not hang out with friends.

Returning to work and my children returning to school soon (preschool at Pali View Baptist and Kindergarten at He'eia Elementary) has been a source of anxiety for me. I honestly do not see how the policy of allowing 3-foot distances as long as students are facing forward is going to work. Children at any age are not going to be facing forward all day long no matter what you tell them. They are going to want to turn to their neighbors to talk and with only 3 feet separating them, they will be more than able to have physical contact with one another as well. My young children have a hard enough time sitting still for extended periods of time and are going to want to play with their friends. I understand that keeping them protected 100% of the time is impossible, but it is OUR responsibility to do everything we can to ensure safety. Three feet is just not enough! It dangerously puts everyone at a much greater risk. Six feet is required in every public setting, so why wouldn't that be the expectation in schools as well?!

I understand that requiring 6-foot distances would mean that all of our students would not necessarily fit in our classrooms at the same time. Yes, we, as teachers, are going to need to step up and make many adjustments to make it work. It may inconvenience parents depending on the schedules of the schools their children attend. At the end of the day, HEALTH, SAFETY, and people's LIVES are most important!! The number of COVID-19 cases are on the rise, yet traveling will be opening up around the same time schools are. Knowing this, I will still be reluctantly returning to work and my children will be starting school. All I am asking to please please please at this time is to change your policy to 6-foot distances in the classroom!

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Keri Davis

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Arlyn Sagadraca <arlyns@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the school year 2020-2021.
My name is Arlyn Sagadraca and I am speaking as a teacher and a parent, I teach at Salt Lake Elementary School and my child also attends where I teach. As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the 3 foot social distancing that is being suggested in the classroom. That is why I am here to say that I don't agree and feel safe to work in an unsafe environment for me and for my child to attend.
Sincerely, Arlyn Sagadraca

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

COVIT prevention in school setting 2020-2021 school year

Susan Russo <susanrusso77@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:08 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@BOE.Hawaii.Gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education Representatives,

It is critical that the BOE insists on desks being six (6) feet apart in Hawaii classrooms. To attempt to prevent COVIT in students and teachers, we need for students to be six feet apart, not three feet apart. Children, Teachers and Parents cannot be subjected to the risk of exposure with 3 feet distancing in the name of Education. If you proceed with 3 feet distancing standards, you will put the health of all at risk. Please reconsider this matter. The CDC, Restaurants, Pharmacies, Stores adhere to 6 feet social distancing and schools must do the same.

My granddaughter is starting kindergarten this 2020-2021 school year and I need her to be safe. My daughter is an educator in Hawaii and I need for her to be safe. All of our Hawaii family and friends need to have protocol in place to be protected.

I appreciate your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Susan A. Russo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rodelyn Gonzales <rodelyn.gonzales@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. I am in support of our schools observing the 6-foot social/physical distancing. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Rodelyn Gonzales
Waipahu Intermediae School
School Counselor
307-9020

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lisa Dell <lisadell1@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am testifying on the Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a fifth grade teacher at Waiau Elementary School. I am writing to advocate that there be clear guidance for 6 feet between students' desks at each public school in our state. The agreement reached with HSTA used the language of 6 feet, but in her press conference, the superintendent said that the 6 feet could be modified to 3 feet if desks are facing forward. I feel strongly that our students, families, and teachers be protected by having 6 feet between each desk as recommended by experts at the CDC. Like most teachers, I want us to open schools safely and have them remain open. Thankfully, I have a principal who is protecting the teachers and students at our school by making sure students are sitting 6 feet apart. I cannot imagine having to report to work at a school where a principal is not doing the same, using the superintendent's words to set up a more dangerous situation, but I know many of my colleagues will be facing that. Please do the right thing for our students, families and teachers and follow CDC recommendations for desks 6 feet apart.

Lisa Dell

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Liz Noetzel <Liz.Noetzel@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Greetings:
I am writing as a seventh grade English Language Arts teacher at Waikoloa Middle School.
I am absolutely terrified at the prospect of returning to school if there is only a 3 foot social distancing requirement in place, so much so that I am looking at leaving my position because as much as I need my income, it is not worth dying over.

Our superintendent feels it is ok to violate the MOU with our union and put teachers, students and all family members lives at risk so that she can squish more kids into a classroom. Ask yourselves: would YOU want to spend five days a week in a classroom crammed full of potentially asymptomatic kids? It is inevitable that cases continue to rise as tourism increases, and we WILL have to shut down again if we do not get this right the first time. The superintendent will look like a fool, as will the whole department, if we allow the three foot rule to go through. Why would we violate the guidelines of CDC, the WHO, the UH system and all other schools and colleges? It is absolutely unacceptable and I implore you to ensure that you help protect the many groups who are most vulnerable during this time.

Thank you,
Liz Noetzel
****

Liz Noetzel
Waikoloa Middle School
Seventh Grade
English Language Arts Teacher

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Testimony

Lihau Galo <lihau.galo@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Lihau Galo, a third grade teacher at Ka'ewai elementary school in Kalihi and a mother to a son, an incoming fourth grader, who attends Moanalua elementary school. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As a teacher and a parent, I am very concerned about the 3 feet distance between students in the classroom. Especially when teaching younger ones who are active and love to socialize. I work in a school that serves families who live at the Kamehameha IV public housing community. As reported in the news, there were cases of COVID-19 confirmed in that housing which has made that community vulnerable to being exposed. Which makes me and my fellow colleagues vulnerable to being exposed.

Also, with poverty comes not the very best personal hygiene and the teachers at our school have always gone above and beyond for our students. For example, I, and other teachers, have given used clothes and footwear to students who come to school with unwashed t-shirts and no footwear on their feet. Without practicing proper hygiene at home, we are all at even more risk. We have little ones who will sneeze, pick their noses, or wipe their hanabada all over the place. I have witnessed both students and parents spitting and littering on our school campus without care.

As the teacher, I will be "walking on eggshells" this coming school year because my health is very important and many depend on me, including my own son and family. Having the 6 feet distance requirement is not going to solve the fact that this pandemic is here to stay for a while, but it will give me peace of mind and will keep my students and colleagues much more safe.

As a mother, it will make me feel more comfortable that my son is staying 6 feet away from others. Sending my son back to school is honestly scary with the rising of cases on O'ahu. So, I am asking that the BOE keep my baby safe and my other incoming 16 babies (students) safe this school year by enforcing 6 feet distancing in schools.

Mahalo,
Lihau Galo

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

K. Endo <kellyn.endo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom This May Concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year"

My name is Kellyn Endo and my daughter attends Iliahi ES in Wahiawa. With the ongoing and ever changing pandemic, I think it is foolish for us to send our keikis back to school only allowing 3 feet distance between them.
I understand that education is important, but to rush into it is irresponsible and careless.

Below is from the CDC website:

Guiding Principles to Keep in Mind

The more people a student or staff member interacts with, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. The risk of COVID-19 spread increases in school settings as follows:

- Lowest Risk: Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
- More Risk: Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- Highest Risk: Full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

By sending our keikis back to school with only 3ft of distance apart from each other is putting everyone at the HIGHEST RISK. The health and wellbeing of our keiki, teachers and staff, and families at home should be your #1 priority. Putting all of us at the HIGHEST RISK is showing us that you do not care.

Please reconsider. Go back to the drawing board, really take your time and come up with a better plan! Please do not risk the health and safety of our community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kellyn A.H. Endo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Keri Davis <mikeri.davis@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening school plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to ask that you give some serious thought to changing your policy of allowing 3-foot distances in the classroom to 6-foot distances, which adheres to the CDC recommendation and to the agreement made with HSTA.

As a Master's student at Chaminade University, a husband of a 5th grade teacher at He'eia Elementary School, a father of two young children, and a primary caretaker of my elderly father-in-law who resides with me, the 3-foot distance you are allowing frightens me to say the least. Since March, my family and I have been social distancing at home. My wife and I will shop for essentials wearing face masks, staying 6 feet away from others, and sanitizing before entering our house. My children rarely leave our property other than going to an empty park for a bike ride or to run around. We are grateful for video conferencing as we do not hang out with friends.

Having my wife return to work and my children return to school soon (preschool at Pali View Baptist and Kindergarten at He'eia Elementary) has been a source of anxiety for me. I honestly do not see how the policy of allowing 3-foot distances as long as students are facing forward is going to work. Children at any age are not going to be facing forward all day long no matter what you tell them. They are going to want to turn to their neighbors to talk and with only 3 feet separating them, they will be more than able to have physical contact with one another as well. My young children have a hard enough time sitting still for extended periods of time and are going to want to play with their friends. I understand that keeping them protected 100% of the time is impossible, but it is everyone's responsibility to do everything we can to ensure safety. Three feet is just not enough! It dangerously puts everyone at a much greater risk. Six feet is required in every public setting, so why wouldn't that be the expectation in schools as well?!

I understand that requiring 6-foot distances would mean that all of the students would not necessarily fit in their classrooms at the same time. Yes, the school faculty and staff are going to need to step up and make many adjustments to make it work. It may inconvenience parents depending on the schedules of the schools their children attend. At the end of the day, HEALTH, SAFETY, and people's LIVES are most important!! The number of COVID-19 cases are on the rise, yet traveling will be opening up around the same time schools are. Knowing this, my wife will still be reluctantly returning to work and my children will be starting school. All I am asking at this time is to please please please change your policy to 6-foot distances in the classroom!

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Mike Davis

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Shei Murata <shei.murata@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:32 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year".

My name is Sheilynn Kato and I am a teacher at Wheeler Middle School. I would like to ask that you please reconsider the 3 feet distancing between student desks expectation. I am concerned that this is not enough space since students seem to struggle with wearing a mask. This summer, I taught Home Economics to EL students for three weeks. I spaced them out 6 feet apart and required them to wear masks due to the fact that we would be working with food. With the exception of the first day, every class that came through, there were some students who came in without a mask on (it was in their backpack or pocket), lost their disposable mask that was given to them when they arrived on campus, forgot their mask in their previous classroom because that teacher didn't require them to wear a mask or threw away their masks. If masks were on their face, it was either covering just their mouth, covering their chin, or hanging off of an ear. If masks are to be worn when social distancing (6 feet) is not doable, this would mean students should be wearing masks at all times in the classroom due to them being seated only 3 feet apart. I foresee myself spending a lot of class time reminding students about wearing a mask. Also, expecting students who are only 3 feet apart to not turn and face a peer or reach over to a peer during the entire class period is impossible - humans, by nature, are social beings!!

I would also like to point out that per the CDC school reopening tree map https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-decision-tree.pdf, I feel that the State of Hawaii does not meet the criteria to reopen. I don't feel that we can confidently say "YES" to any of the three questions that are posed in the first column. I understand there is a desire to preserve the 180 days for the sake of the children but how many days will they actually receive and what kind of education will they receive if they and their teachers are all sent home to quarantine because one of them tested positive for COVID-19 or has been exposed to it due to the poor decision making of the DOE and Dept. of Health?

Lastly, if the decision of 3 feet distancing/no mask wearing needed/no health checks stands, I would encourage everyone from the DOE and DOH who are involved in planning for the reopening of schools to please be a fly on the wall in a classroom for the entire month of August. I would then ask that they sit in the front of the classroom facing the students (since that's where teachers would stand) - they would be free to do their telework while in the classroom. I would hope that they will see firsthand the environment and the reality that they are putting students and teachers in. The biggest boost to us having confidence in those making the decisions is if the decision makers are willing to walk the talk.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Sheilynn Kato

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tiffany Schnittger <tschnittger@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Tiffany Schnittger and I teach 1st grade at Holomua Elementary School, with 19 currently enrolled in my classroom. There are three points that concern me most after hearing about plan's yesterday: the lack of temperature checks, the social distancing recommendation of 3 feet when facing the same direction and the sanitation practices needed for cleaning the buildings to a safe level.

The recommendation that does not include temperature checks is wildly irresponsible on behalf of the Hawaii's Department of Education. Temperature checks are done routinely worldwide and at schools that have reopened in the US too as a first defense to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Even stores require their employees to undergo this simple, but important preventative measure. The temperature checks should be done at home for students and all staff prior to coming to school, and again by trained staff before allowing anyone to enter the building. I realize this will take more manpower, but it is not acceptable to skip this key factor. Not all those who have COVID-19 display a fever, but the percentage is high enough to at least screen the ones that do. The recommendation for teachers to be responsible for observing student behavior for health concerns without mandatory temperature checks is ludicrous and dangerous. This is not part of our job and it puts us all at higher risk and liability to do so. We are trained as education professionals, not health care professionals. If we are going to bring students back for face-to-face instruction, we need trained health care professionals taking accurate temperature readings at the door for anyone to be admitted into the building.

Secondly, the guidelines for social distancing have been at 6 feet worldwide. That is the minimum distance. To cut this recommendation in half is not safe and it gambles with the health, well-being and lives of teachers, school staff, students and their families. I understand that the three feet recommendation is for when students are all facing the same way, but this is impractical because first grade students will not stay facing the same way. (It is obvious that a teacher did not write this rule.) Students will look back at each other and most likely touch each other in a line up this close. When we teach, we are in the classroom altogether for up to 6 hours, especially if we have to use the classrooms for eating lunch. Students, especially at the first grade level already have issues with learning how not to spread germs. They will spread germs very fast at 3 ft. This recommendation is not one that considers the safety and well-being of our keiki and it could be a death sentence for some teachers and family members with underlying health issues.

Lastly, I have concern about the sanitation practices for the classrooms and the rest of the buildings. Worldwide, schools, and other places that have reopened practice deep cleaning, sanitation practices to keep the areas safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Although it is a nice gesture to supply more cleaning supplies for the classrooms, it is not the job of the teacher to sanitize the classroom. We are educators, not part of the custodial staff. We are trained to teach and have a multitude of new factors to consider already without an extra cleaning duty. The DOE needs to have a plan for adequate deep cleaning for the health and well-being of all those they admit into the schools daily. This will take greater time and money, but it must not be short changed.

After hearing the recommendations of the DOE yesterday, I am not confident in their current plans for reopening. If we do it, it needs to be with considerations for the utmost safety all involved with the resources to support the plan. If this is not possible, then another plan must be made. There is too much at stake and gambling with the health and lives of tens of thousands across the state is not acceptable. Shortcuts should not be made. We must err on the side of greater safety, not less.

https://edsource.org/2020/how-schools-across-the-globe-are-reopening-amid-the-coronavirus-pandemic/634739

Thank you,
Tiffany Schnittger

--
Tiffany Schnittger, M.Ed.
(808) 439-2238

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Elizabeth Bowen <elizabeth.bowen@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

re: Testimony on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **(CDC) recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a memorandum of understanding just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by *"maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."*

Returning to a 3' distancing policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a 6' standard is **disingenuous** and v**iolates the resolution passed by the Board of Education** that claims the 'health and safe of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness are the fundamental drivers to reopen schools."

- On Wednesday, the University of Hawaii announced its reopening plans, which requires 6' of social distancing in university classrooms and facilities.
- Why is 6' distancing required for a college freshman, but 3' is okay for a high school senior?
- Why is 6' required at Costco and at restaurants, but NOT for teachers and students?
- The same rules that apply to the general public should be applied in our schools.
- New York City schools have already seen 74 staff die because of COVID-19.
- HSTA research shows that 30 to 40% of our educators are at HIGH risk for the coronavirus, based upon age and other health factors.

Please kindly peruse these considerations and mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks. Thank you.

--

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Bowen
ELL Teacher

Princess Nahienaena Elementary
808-662-4020 x429

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

cindi shell <cshellhi@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening School Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Cynthia K. Shell and I am speaking as the Student Services Coordinator working at Waialua High & Intermediate School.

As the Student Services Coordinator, I work with not only all students in Gr. 7-12 on our combined campus but parents as well. I am not comfortable nor confident that 3 feet distancing is enough space between students to keep a safe distance from each other. It is unrealistic and not practical. Students are not stationary furniture that stay put all day, even preteens and teenagers. They cannot stay stationary for long periods of time.

If our very own University of Hawaii system campuses are **requiring** and ensuring 6 feet distances for adult students, why would we put younger students at potential risk by compromising at 3 feet social distancing? Does this really make sense?

In addition, masks being optional clearly goes against what Mayor Cadwell's mandate which was approved by Governor Ige and put into effect July 3, 2020 states -*".**mandates** the wearing of face coverings at indoor public spaces, including private offices, enclosed malls and public government buildings."* Even in outdoors situations where 6 feet social distancing is not possible! There it is again, 6 feet social distancing.

Given the fact that the Mayor's and Governor's authority supersedes the State Superintendent's, I believe that this face covering mandate overrides the State of Hawaii DOE statement, "masks are optional."

I am imploring our leaders to make safety for ALL the priority and education second and to let teachers be part of the discussion because we know the reality of how things work in the classrooms and on our campuses. We all want our students back on our campus. We miss them, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Cynthia K. Shell

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion item V1(A) Comprehensive plan for re-opening school year 2020-2021

Joyce Kuniyuki <jkuniyuki@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I realize that trying to open the school year & trying to ensure safety for all is a daunting task. 3 feet social distancing, however, is highly inadequate. Students, by nature, will not maintain 6 feet social distancing, let alone 3 feet. Kids are kids, after all.

Having students & staff wear masks will be another challenge. Yes, it's imperative to wear them but will they wear it properly? You can witness many adults in our community "wearing" their masks. It will be difficult wearing & keeping their masks on properly, especially during our hot summer months with no AC.

Studies indicate that 40% of the population are asymptomatic but are carriers of the virus. Further, the validity of the tests, according to research by John Hopkins, indicates 20% false negatives. Flights from the mainland USA will begin on August 1st. With the opening of our businesses, mixing & influx of tourists, there is great concern for the safety of our students, staff & their families.

Just recently, 8 Hawaiian Airlines employees tested positive after training sessions. These are adults. Can you imagine what happens with students??? It's a domino effect & the spread can be very rapid & devastating.

As I mentioned earlier, it is a daunting task but I don't blame HSTA for not accepting your proposal. Many teachers & staff have underlying health concerns, their own children & elderly to take care of. Naturally they're also concerned about the safety of their students.

My grandchildren attend public school - Kaiser Kalani, Niu Valley & Aina Haina. I know my daughters do not plan to send their kids back to school with this plan in place. I agree with them.

Sincerely,
Joyce Kuniyuki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Annie Schultz <acm_schultz@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:01 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Please minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission by mandating that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks and by requiring that all students and staff wear face masks or shields at all times. At a time when travel restrictions are being lifted and airplanes are being filled to capacity, we must take every precaution to protect our children and our teachers.

My name is Ann Schultz and I am a teacher at Lokelani Intermediate School in Kihei.

Thank you,
Ann Schultz

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Valerie Harmon <lenscap@me.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year".

My name is Valerie Harmon and I am an Art Teacher and HSTA Head Representative at Kalakaua Middle School. My principal has provided a schedule for the 2020-2021 school year that I find uncomfortable. We are supposed to have 50% of students attend Monday and Tuesday and the other 50% of students attend classes Thursday and Friday (with distance learning for all students three days a week). Strangely I have 17, 18 and 19 students in each of my classes, more than the 50% requirement, and an impossible number to even maintain a 3-foot distance, let alone a 6-foot distance. However, as CDC officials have stated, a six foot minimum is required in all public spaces.

There are teachers at my school that have health compromised situations. I, along with other teachers find the three foot minimum requirement very dangerous for both teachers and their students. We do not even have any plastic or plexiglass shields to protect ourselves and our students, yet we are required to remain dangerously close. There have been recent COVID-19 outbreaks in Kalihi, in areas where my students live. Many of the students attending my school live in housing, in close quarters to others, where it is easy for the coronavirus to spread.
We need to slow down and provide adequate distancing, plexiglass or plastic shields and protections to preserve the health and safety of all educators and their students. I am aware of many teachers that would rather not risk their health than keep an underpaid, foolishly dangerous job. How will we educate our children if the educators are not able to safely continue working?
Please do not risk our safety and our lives to reopen schools quickly.
Please provide teleconferencing options. Please mandate that masks are required for all people on campus that are able to safely wear them, and not leave us with a state mandate that says everyone should wear masks, but not that everyone must wear masks. Our students and their families follow the news. When they realize it is not really a requirement to wear a mask, there are going to be many students who will not wear masks. Please provide plexiglass shields for all teachers to put in front of their desks a a start. Please provide my low income school and all schools as well as all educators and school employees the quality attention this matter that all schools deserve.

Thank you,
Valerie Harmon
HSTA Head Representative
Kalakaua Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Nancy Parker <nlpinhi@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Nancy Parker and I am speaking as a teacher and concerned citizen for our keiki and my colleagues.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I taught ESY for special needs kids and I have students that are spitters and medically fragile. I can not put these students a mere 3 feet apart from each other and keep them safe. My spitter is a natural at spitting and has remarkable aim. The 3 feet will only help to improve his aim and be a detriment to my students that are already immune compromised due to their medically fragile condition. Not to mention when this student goes to his general education class that has many more students and staff to take aim at. If the general public and universities are complying with the 6 ft. rule, why would it be any different for our keiki and staff.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to conduct temperature checks for our students as soon as they arrive at school. If we wait for the coughing, sniffling and observations to take place, then it is too late. We have already been exposed as have other students. If we send students back home with a temperature as soon as they get out of the vehicle, then we have reduced the risk of exposure immensely.

Lastly, I do not agree with staff and students not requiring mask wear. Many states have made this practice mandatory for being out in public. Why is being in a public school any different? Schools are a hotbed for transmission and breeding disease. As a teacher, I have watched and been the victim of communicable disease such as, bedbugs, lice, and the common cold. As teachers we are not immune to parasites, disease causing microorganisms and viruses. Yes, we have heard it said that Covid-19 does not affect the young and they don't tend to exhibit severe symptoms like adults. In fact most symptoms go unnoticed in our youth, but yet you are still willing to put some of our most valuable seasoned staff members in harms way by allowing them to be exposed to a deadly virus.

Our leaders have made a very poor decision for reopening the schools. The decisions have left our keiki and our teachers at risk for contacting and spreading Covid-19. Across the country we have seen the devastating effects of Covid-19. As teachers, we did great job with distance learning. We answered the call to provide instruction via Internet on a moments notice. Hawaii is a leading state compared to most states for low transmission of Covid-19. It would be a great tragedy to catch up with the other states that have high Covid numbers. This can all be avoided with adjustments to the current reopening plan. You have teachers that are passionate about teaching their students. Our school leaders can come up with a better plan to combat Covid-19 and keep our keiki, teachers, and staff as safe as possible.

Sincerely, Nancy Parker
Special Education Teacher
Kipapa Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Haley van Noord <alohahaley@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My name is Haley van Weemen van Noord and I have been teaching on Maui at Lahaina Intermediate School for the past ten years.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

After coming to a formal agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard how can the expectation now be reduced to three feet? This violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the 'health and safety of students and staff is the priority.' This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness.

Violations such as this make me want to leave the education profession and leave Hawaii. You have the opportunity to protect students and teachers in Hawaii. Please do the right thing and remember it is our kuleana to give the keiki of Hawaii the education they deserve. Please keep students AND staff safe by investing in distance learning.

Sincerely,

Haley van Weemen van Noord, MS, NBCT

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Fwd: Students need to be kept at 6 ft apart

thai touch <thaitouch.ak@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Due to spikes in covid and reclosing of many states, Students need to be kept at 6 ft apart to help keep everyone safe.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

glendaile santos llamelo <glendaile@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a parent, my child goes to Makakilo elementary school, she will be a 5th grade this school year. I am not comfortable sending my daughter to her school if the DOE allows 3 feet distancing apart. Please allow at least 6 feet apart with hybrid blended learning so that she will not have to be expose in public everyday.

Sincerely,
Concerned Parents

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Liu <koanali@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Directors and Members:

Aloha, my name is Jennifer Liu and I teach at Waialua High and Intermediate School. I am testifying as both a teacher and a parent on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools" for the 2020-21 school year.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident the three-foot distancing is enough space between children, including teens, to keep a safe distance from each other. With three-foot distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arms out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom, we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the six-foot distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children or teens?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will be needed to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

In addition, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is unreliable. We are not health professionals and we cannot actually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others.

Finally, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the three-foot distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my children to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing, which includes six-foot distance and required masks. With no vaccine, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my students' and my children’s education, but their safety is priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing as they are children and don’t know any better. This is why I urge the Board of Education and Department of Education leaders to make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Thank you,

Jennifer Liu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony against New School Safety Handbook.

Ellery Galanto <egalanto@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:27 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Jennie Matsuda <jennie.matsuda@k12.hi.us>, lynne.ajifu@k12.hi.us, eseitzatty@yahoo.com, kkerr@hsta.org, steru808@gmail.com

03 July 2020

To:
Board of Education State of Hawaii
1390 Miller St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Against the recent policies published for schools to follow for reopening for public schools in he fall, in he handbook, Hawaii Department of Education Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan, Health and Safety Handbook.

My name is Ellery Galanto, I am a former elementary school teacher, certified flight instructor, licensed airline transport pilot, United States Soccer Federation Referee, worked for Lockheed Martin Corporation and a concerned parent. My wife Anielyn is a nurse manager at a local hospital. My child Nova attends a local public school and we also have a 1 and 1/2 year old daughter named Galaxy.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC) has advised us not to gather in large gatherings, and I think we should consider schools as to be large gatherings. Why are we going against these advisements?

I have attach links to two news articles article and one published scientific study. The first linked article is interviewing Dr. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy Infectious Diseases(NIAID) stating the Covid-19 may have mutated. He was one of the leading scientist to help fight the AIDs pandemic. The second linked article, published June 29th, by the Washington Post, interprets and puts in layman's terms what the scientist from Los Alamos Laboratory have discovery that the Covid-19/SARS Covid-2. The third linked article is the actual published research data of the mutation of the Covid19/SARS Covid-2 by the Los Alamos Scientist published June 12th.

Following links to new articles and research:

1. The coronavirus may have mutated to become more infectious, Dr. Anthony Fauci says

https://apple.news/AdjAEiFxIREGtioR3Hac5JQ

2. This corona virus mutation has taken over the world. (This article explains in layman's terms what the following research 3rd article)

https://apple.news/APlWJ_wU5SgGvNcpgosR9yA

3. This is the actual research published June 12th, by the Los Alamos scientist that's cited in article #2. (Click full text for full graphs and data.)

https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.06.12.148726v1

It is a matter of public safety, that we stop all social events that bring people in close proximity to each other, to prevent the spreading of Covid-19/SARS Covid-2. Schools are inherently a large gathering. Distant learning should be the main focus of the Board of Education(BOE) and Department of Education(DOE), all available resources should be reallocated to those efforts. This recent study by the Los Alamos scientist researching the Covid-19 DNA structure, was published on June 12th. I'm not sure if the DOE and BOE has considered this study in the development of this health and safety guide.

Citing from the recently released, Hawaii Department of Education Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan, Health and Safety Handbook.

"Maintain a distance of at least three feet between seats, including group tables, if students are facing the same direction."

“In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask. Facial recognition and expressions are very important social cues in a child’s development. A classroom full of mask-wearing students may cause unhealthy anxiety for students.“

When a person coughs, air droplets can travel well beyond the three feet minimum this safety guide is allowing. Not wearing a mask in the classroom setting, goes against everything the scientist have advised against. There is no bubble. This bubble does not exist, as everyone in the school will leave and return, and this is how the virus spreads: movement of the respiratory system of the human body. Being in close proximity is what keeps this virus going. And based on these published standard, school will be the instrument of the spread of this highly contagious virus. The lives of our children, the teachers, the staff, the administrators, the custodians, chef’s in the cafeteria, are paramount to going back to normal. I know our virus rates and counts in Hawaii are low, but that doesn’t mean we should try to focus to going back to how it was. We must do our best to keep them low until a vaccine is created.

Solution, everyone assist in a full distant learning program by reassigning job responsibilities. Zoom, online learning is a 100% prophylactic against Covid19. You can not get Covid19 from a computer monitor. I won’t go into details, we have very highly competent people in the BOE and DOE that can plan for distant learning.

A lot of people, like to think that there is a “going back to normal “ one day. That will will never happen, if you look at the nature of a Coronavirus, these virus and their variations have been with us since the mid 1960s, when they were first discovered. We as humans need to change, just like these viruses change, we need to adapt. If not, many of our loved ones will be taken by SARS Covid-2 virus.

Thank you for your time,

Ellery Galanto
95-1035 Kahakiki St.
Mililani, Hawaii 96789
C: 808-255-4991
E: egalanto@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Richard Stange and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Mililani Middle School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. Children are not stationary furniture that stays put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arms out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children? Why do college freshmen need to be 6ft apart while high school seniors only need to be 3?

I am expected to stand 6ft away from the patron in front of me on line at Target. Public guidelines should be followed in public schools as well.

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Lastly, as a teacher I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. Without a vaccine, we cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing. They are children, and do not know any better. That is why I implore our leaders to make safety for ALL the priority, and education second. Please let teachers be a part of the discussion, because we know what will work and what will not. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Richard Stange

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Elina Tabudlo <elina.tabudlo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This email is in regards to the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." I'm surprised to see that the DOE is allowing students to sit **3 feet apar**t, regardless of configuration I have yet to see any recommendation supporting this.

I have learned that as a mother, I am my child's best advocate. I am also learning that parents need to be teachers' advocates as well. If we don't support teachers and care about their health & wellbeing,who will be there to educate our children? As it stands, the public is under the impression that Hawaii has a shortage of teachers. So is it not in our best interest that we ensure our teachers are safe in the workplace? Please reconsider the social distancing of children in the classroom regardless of desk setup to a **minimum of 6 feet** as advised by the CDC. Let's keep our teachers healthy and working.

Also, in the future the DOE should have a contact person or department regarding surveys. I am adding the following concerns since there is no email or phone number as to who I can reach out to. Parents were asked to complete a survey regarding the learning at home of our children. There is no information on what the DOE is trying to glean. From what I got from the questions posed in the survey, the DOE is only concerned about whether we have devices, internet and what ethnicity we are. Ethnicity? Is it any of your business? No explanation as to why this is pertinent in the delivery of curriculum. NO interest was given to the proficiency of the online learning, the apps used, the success of our students, the struggles of our students, whether there was any learning at all, the amount of time online with a teacher, feedback from teachers, etc. Instead, the DOE does the bare minimum at best while throwing all responsibility onto the Principal - the online learning, the upcoming fall school reopening. No announcement was made on July 2nd! Dr. Kishimoto announced the use of in person, online and blended models. Well didn't we already know this!!!!!! She used this time to just push the responsibility onto the principal which could have been down a month ago to give the teachers more time to prep for the fall.

Concerned Mililani Waena Parent,
Elina Tabudlo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lisa Kon-mukai <lisa.kon-mukai@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am hereby testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Lisa Kon-Mukai and I am a teacher at Waiakea Elementary School in Hilo. I am over 60 years old with a current respiratory problem, and have been teaching for 34.5 years. I was planning to continue teaching, However, I plan to retire if the Department of Education does not mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks, as the DOE and HSTA had agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed on 6-27-20. The CDC recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. Additionally, the University of Hawaii's reopening plan requires 6 feet distancing, so this should be consistent with our younger keiki. Thank you.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Clinton Ono <clintonono1@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 12:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

In re: to Item VI(A)-
I am writing this email to voice my disappointment in Superintendent Nishimoto's outline in the precautions, or lack thereof, that she has lazily created for the upcoming school year. I feel that the 3 foot rule is downright ridiculous. Ever since covid started, the magic number has always been 6 feet. That's literally all I have heard while being locked up in my home with my family for the last 4 months. Not 4 feet, not 5 feet...6 feet. And now she wants to come out with this 3 feet nonsense??!!! This is almost as baffling as when she said that schools would only be opening up when HI went 4 weeks straight without one single new covid case.
Kishimoto needs to do 2 things:
1. Take a more direct and commanding role as the head of the public school system. It was very disturbing to watch on the news how lackluster and passive she was in all the new guidelines that the schools will be laying out this coming year. It literally looked as if she told every school to just figure it out for themselves and she was simply the media liaison for the DOE as opposed to the superintendent.
2. Do everything to ensure the safety of our children at school. Many of us parents have made extreme sacrifices for our children over the last 4 months just to give them and everyone around them the best chance at being safe. If all that comes crashing down when school starts for no other reason than poor and lazy planning by the DOE, there will be a lot of furious parents that the state will have to answer to...and I would hate to see those questions come in the form of lawsuits and calls for the higher ups to be terminated.
I am not demanding for the public school system to be completely perfect or without any flaws. I know and understand that we will never be able to compete with a Punahou or an Iolani. What I am asking, though, is for the DOE to show every parent that they are trying just as hard as we are to keep our children safe and healthy. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Clint Ono-Father of Caleb Ono, 2nd grader at Manoa Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

inadequate health and safety guidelines

Dawn Tillery <heydaydawn@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
The HIDOE's Health and SAfety document for reopening schools has serious flaws. For example, pages 5-6 state that face masks do not need to be worn in classrooms, that students need to be seated only 3' apart if they are facing in the same direction, and that face shields are not necessary for teachers.

Please do what you can to revise these recommendations so that we can minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

Mahalo,
Dawn Tillery
school counselor
Hilo High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

reopening of school

Ashley Ibana <ashleylalaine@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am lalaine Ibana a mother of a child that attends Iliahi elem school, I feel that the children will not be safe under the health safety rules DOE has made and I don't feel that 3 feet of social distancing is enough for the children when they go back school, they don't understand how serious it is for them to practice social distancing and I don't think they understand how important it is to wash their hands through out the day,I don't agree that the teachers will not take the childrens temperature daily and how is it possible for the students to be safe without wearing mask,I don't feel my son will be safe at school and I am afraid he might get and bring home the virus to our household I am only thinking about our safety,
We cannot afford to get sick, I'm really concern because I am about to have a new born baby and the baby will not have had any immunization shots and we also have a carehome with elderly people,
I hope the governor and DOE will seriously think about the situation that they are putting our innocent children in.Thank you!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

D Kupihea <lono_68@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A) regarding the safe distancing of students in the class. My children attend Aina Haina Elementary in the K and 4th grade and I am concerned that the 3 feet separation is ineffective in keeping my kids along with the other student at safe distance from being exposed to COVID-19. This also runs contrary to the MOU that HSTA has HIGHLY recommended and is in line with CDC guidelines.

Our children expect us to keep them safe and if we cut the system down to allow the 3 feet separating distance as opposed to the 6 feet distancing recommendations, we are setting ourselves up for failure by possibly having our children become exposed to this disease. I oppose any action that would place my kids and the other students in jeopardy by not being 6 feet apart. Since this pandemic began we have drilled it into our kids to keep their distance, now we are telling them it will be okay to sit closer to someone? How confusing this is to them after months of social distancing. If seating distances of 6 feet are is not established at Aina Haina, I WILL NOT have my kids attend their classes until a suitable safety protocol has been mandated and placed into effect that protects them and all other kids.

I ask the BOE TO PLEASE ADHERE to the policies and recommendations of the CDC and honor the MOU WITH HSTA and keep the kids 6 feet apart!

Thank you

Sincerely,

David Kupihea

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY - Discussion Item VI(A)

Jessica Sorce <jessica_sorce@kapaaes.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,
My name is Jessica Sorce. I am a healthy 25 year old Special Education Teacher working at Kapa'a Elementary school with 3-4th grade students. I have 4 Parapros, 1 RBT, and 1 EA that will be in my classroom for the duration of 2020-2021 SY. I would like to stress the importance of social distancing in the classroom and demand the board of education mandate classrooms to be configured with six feet between student desks and service providers. During a normal school year my students are often missing school due to sickness (colds/flu) that commonly affect more people with moderate to severe learning disabilities. Please keep this in mind when making considering in person schooling.

Attn: Discussion Item VI(A): *"Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."*

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

--
Miss. Sorce

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Mark Tanaka <mtanaka1995@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Mark Tanaka and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Kipapa Elementary School and just recently became a Dad for the first time, during this Covid-19 pandemic.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. As we all know it is very challenging to keep children still and in their seats for extended periods of time, so if they are a lot closer to each other, this could cause chaos and disruption within the classroom. I can definitely understand that when it comes to masks it would be a challenge for certain students to keep it on, however if we would like to teach our children on how to follow guidelines and procedures set by the CDC, then having masks on will be what is required of everyone. There may be ways to allow students to take breaks from wearing their masks throughout the school day, but if this has been one of the expectations set in place for our state, it would make sense to follow it in our school also.

Now as a new father, it would be challenging for me and a little concerning if I told my wife that I would need to report back to work but just letting you know that masks aren't mandatory and also social distancing of 6 feet or 2 arms length is not expected.

Sincerely,
Mark Tanaka
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: 3 ft Spacing

Nick Matherne <nmatherne@kaimukihs.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. I work at Kaimuki High School as the band teacher. Having read extensively on the subject, I feel it is important to say that 3ft spacing is *unacceptable* for the reduction of spreading COVID-19. As a recent article stated, " The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19." It is unreasonable to expect that students will face only one direction for an entire class period or school day. The 6ft spacing (with masks) is the only appropriate measure should we attend school in person.

--
Nick Matherne
Band Teacher
Kaimuki High School
(808) 733-4900 ext 349

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Ashley Ibana <ashleylalaine@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Lalaine Ibana mother of a child that attends Iliahi Elementary School, I feel that the children will not be safe under the health safety rules DOE has made and I don't feel that 3 feet of social distancing is enough for the children and they don't understand how serious it is for them to practice social distancing,I don't think they understand how important it is to wash their hands through out the day and I also don't agree that the teachers will not take the childrens temperature daily and how is it possible for the students to be safe without wearing a mask,
I don't feel my son will be safe at school and I am afraid he might get and bring home the virus to our household,I'm about to have a new born baby and the baby will not have had any immunization shots and we also have a carehome with elderly people, I am only thinking about our safety.
We cannot afford to get sick.
I hope the governor and DOE will seriously think about the situation that they are putting our innocent children in.Thank you!

Testimony

Koji Hayashi <khayashi906@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Todd Koji Hayashi and I am testifying in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am currently a 3rd grade teacher at Nanakuli Elementary School and I am deeply concerned that the Department of Education is now saying that 3 feet of social distancing is safe. The CDC guidelines have stated that 6 feet is still the safest because of the distance that droplets can move when speaking, coughing, or sneezing. In an elementary classroom, those 3 things are happening constantly. Even with less students in class, there will still be lots of communication between the students and the teachers.

It was stated that 3 feet is safe as long as the students are facing forward, but this is unrealistic to expect. Students are taught to face the speaker, which means they will be turning to the side or to the back when another student is sharing. They may also turn to ask their neighbor a question or discuss a problem with them. Anytime this occurs, they are no longer maintaining best practices and they put all of us at risk. Teachers, Educational Assistants, Administration, Custodians, Office Staff, Students and their families are all at an increased risk for contracting COVID-19 because we want to try to fit more students into the classroom.

I have a 2 year old son and it is imperative that I keep myself safe so that I do not infect him or my wife. The consequences could be fatal. If the students are not being kept safe then teachers are not safe either. You must mandate that students and staff be at least 6 feet apart in classrooms to try to reopen schools as safely as possible. If anyone in a school gets sick with COVID-19, it will be a disaster because it could have been spread to numerous people/families by the time we will even know who has it. If this happens, the students will suffer and we will be forced to go back to strictly distance learning, which was ineffective for our students on the Leeward Coast at the end of last school year.

Please consider the safety and well-being of everyone in the state and mandate 6 feet of social distancing at all times in schools. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Todd Koji Hayashi

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ann Endo <aendo@hawaii.rr.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: "K. Endo" <kellyn.endo@gmail.com>

Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:42 PM

As a Grandparent active in the everyday lives of our grandchildren, I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. It is imperative the DOE adheres to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommending that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. Grandparents play an important role as parents need to work to sustain living in Hawaii and Covid-19 is necessitating greater demands on families (grandparents) to come together to keep everyone safe. Grandparents are considered to be in a higher risk group and the DOE must not jeopardize our well-being and families. I have six grandchildren ages 7 and under and their lives "**MATTER**" and should not be carelessly dismissed.

My name is Ann Endo and my grand-daughter, Blake Endo attends Iliahi Elementary School and my grandson, Seiji Uemura will attend Holomua Elementary where my daughter, Jaimee-Ann Uemura is an educator.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Ann Endo

Testimony

kim <kimapali444@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

I'm a teacher at Aiea Elementary. Our school consists of about 95% of Halawa housing children. We have many problems with hygiene (bed bugs, lice, pink eye, etc.) and parents send them to school when they are sick because they don't want to watch them at home. They don't understand the seriousness of the situation and even before this pandemic, we have to teach them to wash their hands and cover their mouth daily.

I ran into a student at the beach who said her Dad just took the Coronavirus test because his coworkers had it and he was sick with a fever and cough. When I asked her if he had it, her response was, "We don't know, he didn't get the results yet " I explained to her that they should quarantine at home until they get the results. When I questioned where her Dad was, she said he was cooking and she pointed to a group of about 30 people bbq-ing. I immediately contacted my school and declined to teach summer school (although I could've used the extra money). I'm extremely afraid to step foot on campus due to our population we work with. I have elderly parents and in-laws who we see regularly, and 3 young children at home. I also have asthma, which puts me in a high risk category.

How will our school and others schools in our same situation be handled? Will their be extra guidelines for us? Majority of our students do not bring in school supplies, nor cleaning supplies, and I usually end up picking up the slack. I know you mentioned reimbursement, but do high risk schools get a higher budget? And it will be nearly impossible to house all our kids in our classroom. I don't think it makes sense that the entire nation has 6 feet distance guidelines, but when we're put in a high risk situation, we only need 3 feet apart. I am still social distancing at home and when I do go out, I make sure I'm at least 12 feet from the next person. I'm just really concerned and have anxieties (which I'm now on medication for) when thinking about August 4th, so much that I'm developing various health issues.

I would like you to please take into consideration all of these situations before announcing the opening of school. We love and miss our students, but I'm not risking my life or the life of my family for a job.

Thank you.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Eric Iwasaki <erici@hawaiiantel.net> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Eric Iwasaki and I am a 7th grade social studies teacher at Kalama Intermediate on the island of Maui.

For the safety of every resident on Maui, I think each school needs individual guidance from the Department of Health regarding the social distancing in classrooms.

Each school should have an qualified person making decisions or approving of decisions made by the school in regards to social distancing in classrooms.

Right now, we have a temporary principal, a registrar, and a group of teachers who are not qualified to make these important safety decisions that affect everyone in the community as well as the larger community of our island.

Sincerely,
Eric Iwasaki

Testimony

Donna Tamaye <dtamaye@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 1:58 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Donna Kurisu Tamaye and I am a Special Education Teacher at Kalani High School. I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the SY 2020-2021.

As you may know the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that "students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects" to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. Furthermore, according to the CDC the three primary ways to minimize risk of spreading COVID-19 are a combination of three strategies: social distancing, masks, and hand washing/disinfecting.

On July 3 Mayor Caldwell proclaimed a new face mask mandate for all indoor public spaces as well as outdoors when physical distancing is difficult to maintain. However, to date, public school students will not be required to wear masks, which will be compounded by seating students just three feet apart. This will unquestionably jeopardize not only students' health, but also the health of our faculty, staff, and support service providers. Given the already high cost of living in Hawai'i and the current unstable economy, many of us live in multi-generational homes or provide assistance to our kupuna. Personally, my sons and I have histories of asthma and provide assistance to my 82-year old mother on a weekly basis. Being thrust into an environment that threatens our health and safety is unacceptable to me. As a recent widow and a teacher with nearly 20 years in the DOE, if I feel compelled to choose between teaching and my family's health and safety, I will, without any hesitation, choose my family.

I want to believe BOE members care about our students, families, and DOE personnel they serve. I ask that the BOE follow the CDC guidelines of seating students six feet apart to prevent our schools from being flung into the perils of high risk environment for COVID-19. Let's not let Hawaii fall into the ranks of Florida, Texas, Arizona, California or the 30 other states which either re-opened too early and/or did not enforce social distancing and mask wearing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

With Kind Regards,

Donna Kurisu Tamaye

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social distancing

janelle torres <torresjanelle13@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dearest BOE,
Please do not allow only 3ft social distancing in the classrooms. The guidelines from the CDC is 6ft. There are reasons for this, one of the main being that spit/saliva and therefore the virus can travel that distance when speaking/coughing/sneezing etc around others. Anything less is pointless and would put our Keiki in jeopardy. Please make the right decisions when it comes to the safety of our Keiki here in Hawaii and help decrease the spread, and not the political ones.

Mahalo,
Janelle Torres
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Mae Masuda-Kop <masudakop@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on DIscussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the school year 2020-2021.
My name is Mae Masuda-Kop and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Salt Lake Elementary School and my child attends Moanalua High School. As a teacher and parent, I am not comfortable with having a 3 feet distance between individuals in the classroom when they are facing forward because students may not always be facing the same way. That is why I support the 6 feet distancing between students as initially stated to ensure the safety of all individuals in the classroom.

Sincerely,
Mae Masuda-Kop

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Cori Webb <coriwebb86@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools' plans for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Cori Webb and my children attend Sunset Beach Elementary School, and Kahuku High and Intermediate School. I also work at Kahuku Elementary School. I do not agree with the decision of having the children's desks 3 feet apart. THE VIRUS CAN MOVE SIDEWAYS. Children should be a minimum of 6 feet apart. If this cannot happen, I SUGGEST THE SCHOOL CONTINUE DISTANCE LEARNING.

My son has SBS, Short Bowel Syndrome, as a result of Hershsprung's Disease as an infant. COVID-19 in children has displayed a condition similar to Pediatric Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (PMIS), which presents itself with severe abdominal pain and diarrhea. It causes severe inflammation in children. This directly affects my son and he could DIE. My husband and I have bills that need to be paid, therefore, we cannot simply homeschool them as we would wish to. We rely on BOE and DOE to keep our children safe. Please keep our children (and staff!) safe and reconsider your 3 feet apart decision.

Mahalo,
Cori Webb
Haleiwa, HI
CoriWebb86@gmail.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hawaii Public School Reopening Plan

Alicia Jacobson <asjmaui@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

July 3, 2020

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter. After much time and energy to communicate and express my concerns with the DOE's response to the CORVID crisis, I am fearful due to lack of adequate response regarding a plan to prepare for the upcoming school year from the DOE.. As an educator in the HIDOE for over 20 years, I have spent countless hours working beyond contract in quarter 4 and summer to provide the most engaging standard based lessons for my haumana, so the lack of academic gains is a concern to me, but the social emotional well being of keiki is my greatest concern at this point.

In my opinion, the lack of planning for the 2020-21 school year is a recipe for disaster. With the spread of COVID skyrocketing in many parts of the country and the opening up of Hawaii to visitor travel, we will be impacted more greatly in the coming months. Today, 29 more cases reported by the state. https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/ Even one death that could be prevented is too many.

With this data, it would be wise for the DOE to make a plan that involves proper distancing and providing options for parents who can keep students home. Restaurants and hotels remain closed, and if our health care facilities become filled to capacity, we will be forced to shut down our state again. Please look at proper social distancing and distance learning to prevent this from happening. We need to prepare teachers and students for distance learning in case we are shut down again or as an opportunity to meet the needs of our haumana in the future.. Until a vaccine is made available, we will need to make changes to prevent unnecessary death due to CORVID spread.

A 3 foot rule will not be enough to prevent viruses from spreading in a school setting as most students are not able to face forward for long periods of time. Expecting students to make the same academic gains as in non-pan epidemic years is illogical. Many communities are facing financial and emotional hardships at this time and our keiki are directly affected. I beg you to work with teachers, parents, and community members to craft a plan that will keep us all safe and prevent chaos this upcoming school year. We need flexible plans and options for our families. Now is a wonderful opportunity to connect with our communities and encourage collaboration between classroom teachers and administrators.

Please take this moment in time to better our system by strengthening staff tech skills, build consistency within our school system, and most importantly, create a symbiotic relationship with our communities. We are being given an opportunity to do better.

--

With warm aloha,
Alicia S. Jacobson



Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Freitas <jjbli808@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Jennifer Freitas and I am speaking as a concerned teacher. I teach 3rd grade at Solomon Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I taught summer school this summer and attempted the 3 foot distance between desks with 3rd graders and it was impossible to keep them from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. And this was with only 8 students in my summer class. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students.

My school says that we can fit up to 12 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

It will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Freitas

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

tina doherty <christinadoherty1@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a teacher at Waikoloa School. I am concerned about the 3 feet social distancing as all of the reports I have seen recommend 6 feet as best practice. I am a firm believer in being proactive and not having to go back and tighten up restrictions, after a failed attempt to inappropriately social distance putting students, teachers and families at risk.
Thank you for your support,
Christina Doherty
808-756-5061
christinadoherty1@yahoo.com

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Margaret Peterson <margaretpeterson11@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:39 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Margaret Peterson and I am writing in testimony on discussion item VI(A). I work at Kihei Elementary School, Maui, and more specifically, I work with students in grades K-2. It is my understanding that there was an agreement between HSTA and the DOE to do whatever they can to minimize the spread of Covid 19 by ensuring social distancing of at least six feet as is the recommended by government and health experts. However, during yesterday's press conference, Superintendent Kishimoto stated that a distance of three feet is sufficient. In addition, I now understand that wearing masks is not required. In my opinion, the combination of improper social distancing and no requirement to wear masks is irresponsible, and places students, teachers, and all school staff at serious risk.

As stated previously, I work directly with students in grades K-2. Superintendent Koshimoto stated that a distance of three feet between students is sufficient as long as the students are facing forward. To expect our young students to stay at their desk facing forward for the entire school day is ludicrous.

For the health and safety of all of our students, teachers, and school staff, I respectfully ask that the DOE be required to enforce the six foot social distancing rules within our classrooms.

Sincerely,

Margaret Peterson

Kihei Elementary School, Maui, HI

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jaimee-Ann Endo <jaimee.endo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Jaimee Uemura, teacher at Holomua Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

As an educator, I feel that it is our responsibility to keep everyone safe when schools reopen this fall. I DO NOT believe that 3ft distance is acceptable to keep us all safe. The CDC guidelines recommend 6ft spacing between seating/desks to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19. It is also stated in our MOU between HSTA and the State, "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Please see the reality of how COVID-19 affects all. If proper guidelines, like social distancing are not followed in the school setting, will you take responsibility for all the lives that are affected because of your decisions?

I have 2 young children, an elderly mother in-law (high-risk), and husband who is high risk. My youngest is cared for by my parents who are also high risk. I do not want to put their lives in jeopardy. My eldest son will also be starting Kindergarten this year and as a parent, I do not want him sitting only 3ft from another student. Especially for our youngest students, they cannot control their coughs and sneezes all the time. It is imperative that they remain the farthest distance from each other in their learning environment while wearing proper face coverings as well to minimize the potential spread of the virus.

Let's be part of the solution for stopping the spread of COVID-19, not part of the problem!

Mahalo,
Jaimee Uemura

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristi Izumoto <izumotophotography@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 2:52 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

I am submitting my testimony for Discussion Item VI (A):Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 School Year. I have two children that attend Mililani Waena Elementary School and I will be teaching there as well starting this year.

It is absolutely ridiculous that schools will reopen this year with 3ft of distancing as guidance. While I want to make sure that our students have the best education possible, sacrificing their health, the health of their loved ones, and overwhelming our health care system is NOT the way to do it. If current guidelines everywhere else recommend social distancing of 6ft even when wearing masks in public spaces, what makes it ok for our kids to go back to school with only 3ft. of social distancing?

Elementary school children, especially, are among some of the best germ spreaders that we have in our community. They have trouble during normal times with following basic hygiene practices, such as sneezing into an elbow, keeping their hands away from their face, and not touching others. Yes, we can teach them to be better at these things, but they are not going to turn into little perfect hygiene machines. They will spread germs.

There is a reason why kids get sick more in the winter than during summer, and here it doesn't have as much to do with our weather. Kids are super spreaders and putting them in a classroom with 20-30 kids every day during a pandemic without proper social distancing and safety measures is down right reckless. While children need to be in school as much as possible, we have to do it in a way that will keep germs from spreading. Having children spaced out 6ft, wearing a mask whenever possible, and keeping them in smaller cohorts will greatly reduce the risk of spread through the air and limit the amount of physical contact between students and staff.

Mandating 6ft. of distance in schools is important to keep our keiki safe, but it's not just for them. Some of them may have underlying conditions which will make going back to school even more dangerous, but even if they don't it is impossible for us to know how many staff, relatives, Kupuna, etc. could be affected by the choices that we make for the students. While the risk to my own kids and myself might be small, we live with and help take care of grandma who also has COPD. If we bring this disease home to her, we very well may kill her.

Opening schools almost certainly is going to mean an increase in cases. We do not want our hospitals to reach a point where there are too many cases on our islands for them to handle. We need to make smart choices for our schools. We need to have 6ft of distancing. There needs to be mandatory masks, except for individuals that are recommended not to due to underlying conditions from their doctor. When 6ft of distancing cannot be maintained, there needs to be protective barriers put in place. These decisions need to be mandated and quickly, so schools can adjust properly and get ready to bring kids back safely.

Thank you,
Krist Izumoto
--



KRISTI IZUMOTO
PHOTOGRAPHER

IZUMOTO PHOTOGRAPHY
OAHU HAWAII
+1 (808) 358 - 2775 izumotophotography@gmail.com izumotophotography.com

LEAVE US A REVIEW!

We'd love to hear your thoughts, and value your comments. If you enjoyed your experience as much as we have, please leave us some feedback at one of the sites (or more) ;p listed above when you have the chance. We sincerely appreciate it!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Paul Nielsen <pauln0816@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Paul Nielsen and I am writing in testimony on discussion item VI(A). My wife works at Kihei Elementary School, Maui, HI. We have been following the news closely as it relates to Covid 19, and the plan for the upcoming school year.

It was my understanding that there was an agreement between HSTA & the DOE to do whatever they could to minimize spread of Covid 19 by ensuring social distancing of six feet. During yesterday's news conference, however, the Superintendent stated that a social distance of 3 feet is now considered sufficient as long as all students face forward. First of all, to expect young children to stay at their desk, facing forward, for the entire school day is ridiculous. This, coupled with the fact that masks will not be mandated, will place our students and staff at serious risk.

Students, student's parents, teachers, and all school workers deserve to know that everything possible is being done to protect them. I respectfully ask that the DOE be required to enforce the six foot social distancing until such time as Covid 19 no longer poses a threat to the lives of the people in our community.

Paul Nielsen
Friend of students and teachers at Kihei Elementary School, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 20-21 school year

brandi skeen <btsnbms07@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:17 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education:

I am a parent of a public school student and I am extremely concerned about the 3-foot distancing policy. I strongly feel that a 6-foot distancing policy as recommended by the CDC should be in place. Please do not put our children, teachers, staff, kupuna, and families at risk.

Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,
Brandi Skeen
Ewa Beach Elementary School
Ewa Makai Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

James Cabralda <james.cabralda@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is James Cabralda. I am a teacher at Leilehua High School and my son, Jayden attends Mililani Mauka Elementary.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I implore the Board of Education to mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

For the safety of my son, my students, my fellow teachers, and all of the staff working to educate our Keiki in our public schools...

PLEASE mandate that all classrooms in our public schools be configured with six feet between student desks!

Thank you very much for your help in these dangerous and difficult times,

James Cabralda
Leilehua High School

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Eva Costa <evacosta@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A) Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am demanding that the BOE reconsider their stance on 3-foot distancing in our local schools and follow the CDCs guidelines in that students should remain "at least" (minimum) 6 feet apart when in class instruction resumes.

My teenage daughter has expressed her fear of returning to school, contracting Covid-19 and dying. The thought that students will be seated only 3ft from each other has only added to her anxiety.

I myself am a student of the UH System and I applaud their rational decision to place students at a minimum distance of 6ft from each other during face-to-face classes. The BOE should follow suit and not place our keiki, a vulnerable class, at undue risk.

Mahalo,
Eva Costa
Concerned mother of children who attend King Intermediate and Castle High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Yvette Rapozo <yrapozo0@twc.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:29 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

I am writing in regards to discussion item VI (A)- Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year. More specifically, I am writing to you about the social distancing in classrooms. My name is Yvette Rapozo and I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kapa'a Elementary School on Kauai. I am very concerned about allowing student to sit 3 feet apart as opposed to the 6 feet apart that was agreed upon with HSTA. If the standard everywhere is 6 feet, why would we allow students and teachers to be in close proximity? With the number of COVID-19 cases rising steadily in Hawaii, we nee to take the most precautions in the classroom to ensure we are keeping as safe as possible. As of August 1st, tourism will open up and our cases will rise again no mater how much precautions we take since there will be more people going to work in hotels and in tourist related services and the spread will move around faster. We need to take as many precautions we can to ensure the safest opening of schools as we can to help make it successful for families, student and teachers.

If schools do not have the room for 6 feet social distancing, than having everyone in class everyday cannot be an option and must be taken off the table until our numbers decrease. School may have no option but to do blended learning. My understanding is that plans can change from month to month or quarter to quarter. So please have the DOE mandate and stick to the original plan of 6 feet distance between students and teachers.

Sincerely,

Yvette Rapozo

Teacher, 2nd grade

Kapa'a Elementary School

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Gordon Wong <gwonghi@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Gordon Wong and I'm a grade 1 classroom teacher at Kaimiloa Elementary School in Ewa Beach. I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. We were informed by our school administrator that Superintendent Kishimoto had designated 3 feet to be the safe distance for social distancing in the classrooms and other indoor environments. With all due respect, I wholeheartedly disagree with her assessment. Based on CDCs guidelines, social distance with a minimum of 6 feet is safe for human interaction. I'm very surprised and disappointed because we thought the Memorandum of Understanding specifically stated there will be a separation of 6 feet between students and staff members. As a teacher of 5 and 6 years old children, I can say with certainty they will not be able to face forward the entire time while seated during class instruction or eating. With natural curiosity and excitement, they will turn and face the person who is responding to a discussion or when movement or sound occurs within their peripheral. To be honest, it is almost impossible for any adults as well! I'd also like to request the Board to please require all students and personnel be temperature checked when entering the school. If it is required at the airports and many other establishments, it needs to be done in school as well. Based on my experience as a 30 year educator, students come to school sick regularly. Temperature check needs to be mandated to ensure sick students and adults are prevented from entering campus and potentially getting others sick. I'm asking the Board to please urge our Superintendent to reconsider and comply with the CDC's recommendation of 6 feet for social distancing students in the classroom and other indoor environments while attending school as well as requiring daily temperature checks for everyone entering campus grounds. It is for the safety of everyone!

Thank you for your consideration,

Gordon K. W. Wong
Kaimiloa Elementary School
Campbell Complex, Leeward District

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Fia Emerson <fia.emerson@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I strongly oppose 3ft distancing that the DOE is proposing. Follow the 6ft distance protocol..it is better to be safe than sorry.

My son is a student at Kahuku High School and I dont believe that 3 ft distancing will be sufficient for his safety.

Please reconsider the matter.

Aloha,
Henrietta Emerson

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Mars H <marciehoeke@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:41 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Marcie Hoeke. I have two children, one going into 10th grade and the other going into 5th grade.

Your 3ft plan is unsafe and is contradictory of CDC guidelines. Why would we not follow these guidelines? We love our keiki. Don't you? If, so how can you do this? What is your basis? Kids are not trees. They will not and cannot stay in those imaginary bounds. Be realistic, do not give into greed or fear. If you are to give into fear, fear for our children, our kapuna, our sanity. If schools shut down from preventable outbreaks know that you are a big contributor.

Be patient, stay the course, put education first.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Gretchen Romerdahl <thealohateacher@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

I am submitting this testimony to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehension plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Gretchen Romerdahl. I am a teacher at Kamali'i Elementary School in Kīhei, Maui. I am also a parent of a student at our school.

I do not understand how the Hawaii State Department of Education can set forth policy that student desks only have to be three feet apart. This is absolutely ridiculous! This policy is dangerous for students and staff, and is absolutely disrespectful! How dare they claim to care about our staff and students well-being, while having complete and utter disregard for our health and safety! People are going to die! The CDC clearly states that face masks and six foot social distancing is recommended to reduce the risk of virus spread,

As of July 3rd, there have been 2,732,531 reported COVID-19 cases within the United States and 128, 648 deaths. On the mainland, cases are spiking in several areas. With tourism opening back up the same week as schools reopen, we are undoubtedly going to see an influx of cases. We still need to make effort to flatten the curve, so it does not rise again for the safety of everyone in our islands.

We can't fix everything, but we can try our best to do right by our keiki by mandating 6 foot social distancing for student desks. Our keiki, teachers, staff, and our family members are going to get sick. Some will die. That is the reality of a global pandemic. What you can do to help that, and save lives, is mandate the CDC recommended minimum of 6 feet of social distancing. I beg of you to mandate a minimal distance of six feet between student desks! I beg it of you on behalf of myself, my son, our school ‘ohana, and our community. Mandate 6 feet.

E ‘olu‘olu e kōkua mai iā mākou!

Gretchen Romerdahl
Educator & Mother

Testimony

mnadmike@aol.com <mnadmike@aol.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:18 PM
Reply-To: mnadmike@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. "My name is Nadine Milan and I am speaking as a kindergarten teacher. I teach at Kipapa Elementary School.

As a teacher, I am very concerned about the 3 feet distancing between children especially since masks are optional. I am extremely concerned with this policy because kindergarteners love to talk to their friends and with desks 3 feet apart, they will turn and talk to each other even if their desk is all facing one way. I also would not want my students to sit at their desk and not be able to talk to one another all day. In a kindergarten classroom, it's important to have conversations and movement to keep students engaged. I've asked myself how will I allow my students to safely have conversations and movement with desks 3 feet apart and no mask? To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CDC recommends people to be at least 6 feet apart. Under the CDC's "Guiding Principles to Keep in Mind" even with 6 feet distancing, groups of students staying together with the same teacher, and without sharing objects, we will still be in the category of "More Risk". All other organization are following and mandating the 6 feet social distancing and wearing masks as suggested by the CDC. I understand and believe in the importance of having that face-to-face instruction especially for young children. But I also believe that safety comes first.

I implore our leaders to make safety a priority and open schools with strong safety measures like 6 feet social distancing and requiring a mask (with health exceptions). I strongly believe that it is our responsibility to educate our keiki with the best possible safety measures in place. When students are sick, no learning takes place.

Sincerely,
Nadine Milan

Testimony

chawk@hawaiiantel.net <chawk@hawaiiantel.net> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kevin Kawamura. I'm a sixth grade math teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A):Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School year.

I personally feel that the required social distancing all around should be at 6 feet, not 3 feet. On Saturday June 28, both HSTA and the DOE agreed in the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that schools should social distance 6 feet. On Thursday July 2, Superintendent Kishimoto claimed 3 feet was okay with the support of the Department of Health. I feel that both parties had signed off on the MOU and therefore the 6 feet social distancing should be followed as of written. In addition, the University of Hawaii, public stores like Costco, and restaurants are all following 6 feet social distancing. The CDC also recommends it. This brings a lot of concerns for the health and safety of our keiki, teachers, and their families. Some parents are fearful and even with 6 feet will be having their children stay home. There will be even more parents keeping their children home with 3 feet. Finally some teachers that are near retirement or eligible to retire, will retire and resign. This will only bring more issues in the quality of education that is provided with teacher shortages expected to increase. Please consider urging the Superintendent to mandate a 6 feet social distancing in the schools.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kawamura

Grade 6 Math Teacher

Maui Waena Intermediate

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testifying on Discussion Item VI(A)

Faith Saito <tutusaito@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:37 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
Kenneth & Faith Saito
Parents of teacher with compromised Immune System

WE are concerned parents of a teacher with auto-immune condition! Not happy with this decision as this would totally compomise our daughters health , plus we are seniors! WE also depend on our daughter to run errands etc. during this pandemic. IF she, or we get sick who will care for us????? Unacceptable! Our dedicated teachers are always at the short end of the stick!! This is why Hawaii has a shortage of teachers because they don't have a consistent support system! Always about politics!!! They work hard for their students, put in more "overtime" than any one else, pay is NOT comparable as Hawaii is on the "low" scale. I wish thinking back when our daughter was attending college thinking about a Major I changed her mind! So sad because she loves teaching and her keikis this is why she became a teacher + she worked hard for her Masters! Am asking you to PLEASE think about our teachers health and well-being and our keikis! This Pandemic is NOT even close to ending!
Praying you listen to all pros and cons regarding reopening using wisdom, compassion, caution and an open mind to all concerned.
Mahalo for listening

TESTIMONY FOR JULY 8TH

Julie ko <julieko6866@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Julie Ko and I am a teacher of 25 years. I teach at Mililani Mauka Elementary.

As a teacher, I am very scared to go back to work in July. If I could retire this year, I would do it in a heartbeat. Unfortunately, I'm still supporting my children's college education so I can't. It's almost where I have to choose to feed and support my kids or risk my health/life. Scientists are now discovering that even if we beat Covid it could have long-term effects on your organs such as clots in kidneys, lung scarring, and even heart damage. I am a survivor of a recent heart attack so can you imagine how it makes me feel. Covid affects everyone differently and what if I am that "different" person that can't beat Covid. Can you guarantee me that I will still be around for my children and grandkids? I've had many sleepless nights dealing with stress and anxiety.

I listened to your BOE meeting where all of you agreed that Health and Safety of students and staff was the first priority. When it comes to dealing with people's lives, there should be no compromises made like what Kishimoto is trying to do. How can 3 feet distancing between 22 children in one small classroom with 2 windows be safe??? Most classrooms do not have many windows unless your school is an older classroom. To "squeeze" a whole class in a classroom with 3 feet between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management. DOH keeps says 3 feet if facing forward is utterly ridiculous. Please ask them to show us some science behind that magic number. How did they even get it? Just half of 6?? Everyone and all guidelines that we have seen ALL say 6 feet or more. Has Dr. Park or Anderson been in a classroom and know what REALLY happens in a room full of children? They may have a medical degree but teachers are the experts on what really happens in our classrooms and know what is doable. Students are not science, they are people, who will do and act like children. How can we expect 5-7 year olds to ONLY face forward for 6 hours? They WILL turn to their sides which we can't blame them. They are not furnitures. With only 3 feet, they will be able to touch each other and cough directly on each other. Just this year, I had between 6-10 students out with the flu back in February. One returns, then 2 get sick… It was practically the entire school. This is how fast kids spread their germs to one another.

I want to let BOE know what a lot of schools are doing. They are using the 3 feet loophole as a ticket to just remove furniture and see how many students they can "squeeze" in one classroom. If you require and mandate the safe 6 feet distance then the schools will have to be creative and maybe work harder to figure it out, which they can if they are creative. Why not use the library since kids are not going to be borrowing books? Why not use the cafeteria since kids will be eating lunch in the classrooms? Why not relocate and redeploy staff that are non-classroom teachers to lower class size? As you can see, there ARE ways to do the 6 feet distancing IF the schools are mandated to do it. Don't give the schools an easy way out by allowing them to just say "oh, we can't do 6 feet so we are just going to do 3 feet." Please remember "If There's A Will, There Is A Way." Don't let schools take shortcuts and the easy way out. With the state's spikes and tourism reopening, it is more important to correctly social distance in a school of 900 students. Teachers don't want to say, "See we were right, we told you so." I say this respectfully when I ask why the BOE is having virtual meetings? For your safety. Why are you distancing as much as possible? For your safety. Please put yourselves in my position. Being in a classroom cramped with 22 students all day is just not safe. I can't understand why teachers are fighting for common sense?
Lastly, are schools really ready to reopen in less than a month? Kishimoto should have been planning for this back in March but schools are now scrambling to figure things out and that's why they are taking shortcuts. We need more time. Why do we have to open in August? Is 180 days of instruction more important than saving lives? She said at

her conference that Hawaii will be the first school to reopen in August and sounded proud. Are we rushing the reopening to be the first state to reopen schools? Are other states going to be learning from our mistakes? Why are the other states not reopening? Are we rushing into something that will result in a travesty and have to deal with devastating consequences? Please, do what is right. BOE members are not politicians so please do what is right for our students and teachers and not do things to please the public. Your number one priority was "health and safety of students and teachers." Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,
Julie Ko

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Marcey Beasley <mabeasley@outlook.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:47 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hi my name is Marcey Beasley and I am a parent of a student at Mililani HS. I am also a teacher at Solomon Elementary. I have great concerns that the BOE is not following the CDC guidelines of 6 feet of social distances. To now suggest 3 feet is disturbing and reckless. Let's start the new year safely.
Thank you.
Marcey

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher and Student Safety Covid19

Stepphanie Hamblin <stepphanie.hamblin@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:56 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I was at the virtual meeting on Zoom on July 2 at 2:30pm. I understood that students can be sitting 3 feet apart if they are in straight rows. Where is the evidence that this will stop the spread of Corona Virus? I would like to know where this is documented. The CDC says at least 6ft to prevent the spread of the virus. I will be teaching 2nd grade and I cannot see students sitting in straight rows all day with no interaction. Would any child be able to do this? I couldn't sit and face straight ahead all day as an adult. I miss my students terribly, but I do not want to put them or myself at risk. I cannot see students sticking to the mandate of facing forward and no interaction between them. Until there is a vaccine or therapeutic that will decrease the risk I think sitting 3 feet apart is risky. It will be risky at 6ft apart. I hope we can rethink the 3 ft apart rule and come up with a better solution.
Thank you for your time and consideration.
Stepphanie Hamblin

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

karine <kariney@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 4:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a parent and teacher and am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am shocked that the superintendent would go back on her word, and the agreement and say that 3 feet distancing is enough for our students and staff. I already don't feel safe sending my own child back to school. I also do not feel safe going back to work in the classroom. I am a special education preschool teacher at Keolu elem. My son has attended Waikiki Elementary school since Kindergarten. I believe in public education, but think I will seek to have him home schooled or do virtual learning at home. If we aren't protected, I don't think I'll return to the classroom either. Talking with other teachers and parents, I know that I am not alone.

If you look at the state website there are so many precautions in place. for them. Maybe people forget what it's like to be stuck in a hot classroom with children all around them. Maybe the DOE is comfortable in their air conditioned offices. Maybe there is only one person per cubicle, per office that they don't need to be distanced by others. Must be nice not to have to worry that you can be exposed to COVID-19 at work and bring it home to your loved ones.

Please take care of your teachers, students and staff .

Thank you,
Karine De Lima

Testimony Discussion Item VI(A)

K bo <kimberlying93@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kimberly Ing, and I am a teacher at Kaneohe elementary. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. When I heard that three feet apart is acceptable, the first thing I felt was fear. Fear for myself, students, coworkers, and everyone's families. Six feet is optimal for less spread and risk. Why shorten the distance by half, and then think that's still safe for us? Does the idea of cramming more students into a classroom supersede the safety of all?

The WHO recommends at least one meter. One meter does not equal three feet. I am assuming three feet came from the article *Feasibility of Social Distancing Practices in US Schools to Reduce Influenza Transmission During a Pandemic*. Covid is more deadly than the H1N1 (Swine Flu), where three feet distance may have been utilized. Why are we solely basing this on suggestions? Note that the journal concludes with "the findings and conclusions in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" (Uscher-Pines, Schwartz, & Uzicanin, 2020).

Following the idea of three feet, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) stated they have "evidence that suggests" the similarities of three feet to six feet distancing. However, I could not find their evidence in their resources. Where is the research journal article about that? Where is the study? Do they have any proof? When the New York Times interviewed Dr. O'Leary, who helped write the AAP guidelines, his position was less about the data, and more on the "best interest of overall health" and "something has to give" (Goldstein, 2020). Does one group's interest outweigh the safety and lives of our teachers and students? Doesn't the education system always ask for data? Don't we teach our students to always ask questions? I don't think enough questions were asked when coming to this conclusion.

Three feet is not enough. The article *Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis* stated that "transmission of viruses was lower with physical distancing of 1 m or more, compared with a distance of less than 1 m"(Chu et al., 2020).Three feet, less than a meter, also means nothing when someone has to walk between the three feet or meter. This is not a grocery store where three feet is maintained with tape. I am seventeen inches from shoulder to shoulder. Walking between desks three feet apart, I am left with less than a foot on each side. That is not

social distancing. Students and teachers need to move between desks.They will have to pass everyone in that row and aisle, potentially exposing them in risk all around.

The study also states, "From a policy and public health perspective, current policies of at least 1 m physical distancing seem to be strongly associated with a large protective effect, and distances of 2 m could be more effective" (Chu et al., 2020). Wouldn't we want to be "more effective"? Please note again that it says "at least 1 m physical distancing," which the current three feet between desks does not even account for. With the six feet apart in place, I would have over two feet on each side of a row or aisle; that would give me and my students more protection and lower the risk. Even the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill changed and modified their three feet policy back to six feet (Diep, 2020).

I am asking that the board mandates to implement the six feet policy for the safety of our students, teachers, staff, faculty, and families.

Mahalo,
Kimberly Ing

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Leilani Nomura <lnomura08@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to you to testify on **Discussion Item VI(A); Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehension plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020 - 2021 School Year**.

Currently, I am a 6th grade teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School and proudly have twenty-six years of teaching in our state. I am also a parent to a Sophomore student at Moanalua High School.

I am upset by the recent news about the three feet distancing issue in the upcoming school year. I am against this and **demand that the Board of Education mandate that classrooms be configured with *six feet* distance between student's desks.**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least six feet or two arms length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior grounds whenever possible."

I do not understand why Hawaii Schools will not be doing this in a time of pandemic? We risk the lives of our teachers, students, and families when we don't do this. Furthermore, The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

This issue has a personal connection to me as I am one of the thirty to forty percent of Hawaii teachers that are at high risk of contracting COVID-19 due to underlying health conditions. I love my job as a teacher but you are putting me at risk when you tell me I need to teach in a classroom without the proper distancing. I am not willing to be sick and have long term health issues of COVID-19.

It was announced recently that the University of Hawaii requires their students practice six feet distancing on their campus. When I go to stores to buy food, they require their customers do this as well. Why not Hawaii Public Schools? Rules for the public should also be followed by our schools.

Every precaution must be taken to ensure the health and safety of our students and teachers! This is a priority!

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Leilani Nomura
Teacher - Aliamanu Elementary School

Virus-free. www.avg.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Mary Miura-Aguinaldo <mrs.miuraaguinaldo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Mary Miura-Aguinaldo and I am a teacher at MIlilani High School, and a parent of both MIlilani High School and MIlilani Middle School Students. I am strongly opposed to allowing 3 feet of social distancing being allowed in our schools.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. The recommendations put forth in this guide are ignoring best practices and putting our keiki at risk. Although children aren't as likely to suffer serious complications, many in our state (myself included) live in a household with those classified as high risk. I'm thankful to be working at a school that is working hard to keep to the 6 foot or more guidelines, but it will be all for naught if a sibling of a child in my class is enrolled in a school that only spaces children 3ft apart, is exposed and comes to school a carrier of the virus.

This is also in clear violation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday, June 27: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous at best an downright dangerous at worst. It flies in the face of public safety, ignores the recommendations of the CDC and WHO. This is a clear indication that the DOE is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreements has shown that they really DON'T care about "working together with kindness."

Although we are all eager to see things go back to something closer to normal, the virus itself doesn't see or care about our wants and desires. If we try to take shortcuts and relax protocols too quickly, we will see many of the issues that states like California and Arizona are seeing with massive uncontrolled outbreaks. It is a very real possibility that opening in an unsafe manner will be part and parcel of a course of action that could see Hawaii's cases spike and necessitate a return to much more severe restrictions. While we all recognize the need to have schools reopen in some form so that we can balance the devastating economic effects on our state, we need to do so in a manner that is safe, backed by science, and grounded in aloha.

Please reinstate the recommended 6 feet of social distancing into the guidelines as negotiated and agreed to with the HSTA.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Miura-Aguinaldo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kim Virtudazo <kimvirtudazo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion Item VI: Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan on Reopening Schools

My name is Kim Virtudazo and I am a ninth year teacher at James Campbell High School. I have two children who attend Ewa Elementary, Lily will be in kindergarten and Logan will be in the third grade for the 2020-2021 SY.

I am writing this letter as a concerned parent and teacher. I kindly ask that the Board of Education mandate a six feet distance between desks to promote social distancing. During this COVID time, allowing three feet between students is irresponsible and unfair. When the entire country and most of the world requires six feet distance, there is no reason classrooms should be at a three feet distance. We shouldn't risk the lives of our keiki, teachers, and families by allowing a three feet of social distancing.

As you read this testimony, you're currently sitting at least six feet apart from each other. You're sitting with minimal fear since you're able to socially distance from the other board members. If there are any people present in the board meeting, they're probably all wearing masks and also able to socially distance themselves from each other. Although you may not be fully comfortable, you're able to function without total fear. Please give our 180,000 students in Hawaii the same level of "comfort" and mandate a 6 foot distance from each other. These six feet alone won't make things totally better but this will be a huge factor in kids and parents' comfort level with sending our keiki back to school. For my own children, I won't be comfortable sending them back to school regardless, but I will be way more comfortable knowing they're sitting 6 feet apart from their classmates rather than three. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kim Virtudazo
Jame Campbell High School - Teacher
Ewa Elementary - Mother of a two

Testimony

Sandra Abdelahad <msabby65@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I humbly request for equal consideration. To protect myself, my child, and elderly father, I opt to remain at home -- leaving only for essential supplies. Most items are mail ordered. I choose not to frequent restaurants or bars, even with their 6-foot distancing.

So why am I and the Keiki of Hawaii put at risk with only 3-foot distancing? Are we less valued that bar patrons? Are we not ensured the same level of safety as those in the grocery store? at the bank? at the mall?

Are we going to be at risk until we have evidence that clusters can form at schools too? I am a single parent, the only source of income for my family. My father is 95-years-old with respiratory situations. Are we more expendable than the person who wants to have tequila shots with his buddies? We trust our health and safety to our employers. I implore your wisdom to keep us all safe.

Since I work with a "Vulnerable Population", I will be at risk 5 days a week for 6 hours a day. What are the odds that I have more exposure to CoVid 19 than the bar patron having a tequila shot with 6-foot distancing? I do not teach math, but even I know these are not favorable odds for me.

I have been teaching online 4-5 days a week since April. I am not shunning my professionalism. As an educational professional, we are advocates for the rights of our students. I am being professional in requesting equal treatment and consideration for our health and safety. Please reconsider this mandate of 3-foot social distancing. Please allow DOE facilities to maintain the same 6-foot social distancing that other facilities are allowed. As much as I live for teaching, I do not want to die because of it.

Sincerely,
Sandi Abdelahad
Moanalua Middle School
Educator

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Summer <Sumerlei@aol.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A). My children attend elementary and high school on Kauai Island District. As a parent, and teacher, I am appalled that you would put us all at risk this way. The 3 feet distance recommendation comes with the stipulation that students are able to fave forward. No one is able to look forward for hours, even mere minutes, on end. We are not robots. It will be difficult enough to keep masks on. To allow for 3 feet distance will end up being a shorter distance in reality when kids get up, move around, and behave like kids. Be realistic and uphold the cdc recommendations to keep us all safe and healthy. Cases are going up around the country, we should be more cautious!

Make the right choice and keep everyone safe. If schools are back up and running, put up all safety recommendations.

Summer Holwegner

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Diane Arakawa <diane.arakawa@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Diane Arakawa and I am a teacher with 63 years of experience in the DOE and currently work teaching 2nd grade (also taught Kinder, 3rd, 4th) at Ala Wai Elementary School.

I am extremely concerned about the impending opening of our schools in Hawaii and the inherent risks with the presence of the COVID-19 virus. **6 feet physical distancing, wearing of masks, initial screening, and routine testing of school staff need to be non-negotiable in order to maintain the health and safety of our keiki and school employees.**

Physical distance of at least 6 feet needs to be in place for all. In a classroom, students do not sit silently facing forward at all times. They may start the lesson that way, but soon will move around and turn to talk with others. They will turn to their peers to ask for clarification of instruction, socialize, and walk to go to the restroom. I do not know of any child at any age that would sit facing forward like a zombie for very long and not move around (actually, this includes adults, too).

As a result of that movement, mask wearing should be required at all times in the classroom. If students are wearing a face shield, they might not have to wear a mask 100% of the time but would still be safer with 6 feet of distance between them. Children, for various reasons, may become agitated, upset, cry, speak excitedly, yell, scream, etc, in the classroom- wearing a face mask/shield will alleviate the spread of droplets in these instances. It may also be confusing for children to understand when they should wear a mask and when not to wear a mask (inconsistency is difficult for children). Children and adults may be asymptomatic and have no/few symptoms and mask wearing would also alleviate (NOT eliminate) the spread of virus contained droplets.

If Mayor Caldwell is mandating face mask wearing, why would schools be exempt???

Finally, students, teachers, and staff need to be screened daily before entering school. Our school is close to Waikiki and has increased exposure to incoming visitors from out of state. Our student population is transient ((1/2 of the students that start with us do not stay with us until grade 5), includes many immigrants (including So. Pacific Islanders who disproportionately test positive for COVID-19 according to Dr. Sarah Park -23%), have many parents that work in entry level jobs as clerks, cooks, custodial work, etc. with increased exposure, and many immigrant parents that do not fully understand English. We try our best to explain policies and rules but many still do not clearly understand and send their children to school sick. Many need to go to work so they just give their child Tylenol in the morning to reduce their fever and send their child to school. I've often had to plead with a parent to take their child to the doctor because their child doesn't look or feel well, sometimes for a week or more. Parents often do not pick up their sick child when we phone them, either. A visual check of a child's health status is what we have been doing prior to COVID-19, there should be increased safety checks during this time. All of these factors increase exposure to COVID-19 and require more stringent measures that should be put in place by the DOE for the health and safety of students and teachers.

Please do not make Hawaii's keiki and teachers your guinea pigs and risk their health and safety simply because we have the lowest infection rate in the nation. We do not want to be your test case!!! I believe that even one positive case is too much and a death is egregious and unforgivable. It has also been reported that even those that recover from COVID-19 suffer lifelong damage to their organs. Please search your minds and hearts and consider whether this plan and it's lack of safety protocols is one that you would be willing to risk your own life and your children's lives. Yes, I am definitely concerned about our keiki's academic progress and many families do not have the same advantages and socio-economic status as we do but we need to balance that with their health. If teachers become ill and require a lengthy recovery, that will not help educate our keiki. Is it worth illness, hospitalization, and possibly, death? I urge you to rethink and consider implementing more stringent protocols (6 feet physical distancing, 100% mask/shield wearing, and daily health screening are just a few...) to keep Hawaii's keiki and their teachers safe and healthy.

Diane Arakawa

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

katielrobinson10@gmail.com <katielrobinson10@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education,

My name is Katie Robinson and I am a Special Education teacher at Ben Parker Elementary. Corey Rosenlee said it best when he shared “When teachers say we are willing to do anything for our students, that does not mean they are willing to die. Every precaution must be take to ensure the health and safety of our kiki and out teachers”. I feel that keiki and teachers are being put in danger and that necessary precautions are not being taken. As a high-risk individual with asthma and someone living with other high risk individuals, I do not feel safe returning to school. More so, the policy allowing students’ desks to be as close as three feet to each other in classrooms is extremely dangerous. Policies are put in place for the state that everyone wear a mask and be social distant by six feet. This should not be an exception at our schools. Close proximity in schools is detrimental to the health of our the people on our islands.

Sincerely,
Katie Robinson

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Julia Fernandez <juliamin10@icloud.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Kaua,

I'd like to say some words regarding VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I support 6 feet social distancing regardless of a students age. Children tend to be asymptomatic. But, they could be impacting family members at home.

Our family lives together in my parents home. They are above 65 years in age so they are considered at risk. I can't have my son, who will start kindergarten at Pearl Ridge Elementary to come home and get my parents sick.

I work as a special education teacher at Mokulele Elementary School. My students have special needs and I don't need them to be the guinea pigs for catching COVID and showing symptoms. That's not a risk I'm willing to take.

Please set a plan to be strong at first and ease up as numbers and 6" distancing shows promise.

Thanks for listening,
Julia Fernandez
808-753-7695

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Debra Chu <debra_chu@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:54 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

This is in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. I am a 6th grade teacher at Mokapu Elementary in Kailua, Hawaii. We need to insist on six feet (6ft) distancing in the classroom between students and between students and teachers. The public (adults and children) are being asked to keep a 6ft distance from others as well as wear a face mask on the streets, in shopping malls, grocery stores and restaurants. It shouldn't be any different in the classroom. If we are saying no masks in the classroom then a 6ft distance is obvious. Please help to protect students, their families, and teachers by insisting on a 6 ft distancing policy in the classrooms for all ages.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristi Lee Higuchi <kristih@juno.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

To the Board of Education,

As an educator, parent and community member of the Mililani Community, I am SHOCKED to hear that several elementary schools in our complex alone are considering a 3 feet social distancing distance as okay. AND, that younger students do NOT need to wear face masks shocks, saddens and enrages me as well.

You are not putting just the student and teacher in a serious health jeopardy, you are also putting in jeopardy EVERYONE that they come into contact with.

Here in Hawaii we have MANY multi-generational homes, and if not that, many grandparents who pick up their children from school. You will be exposing those who are in the "At risk" age group in high jeopardy. In a time when HEALTH should come first, those making these decisions are NOT putting the health and safety of EVERYONE in the classrooms, school, community and state at risk.

Please help us to ENFORCE what the WHO, CDC, state and HSTA have stated: 6 feet social distancing! Keep all of us safe, after all, the saying goes, "Better safe than sorry!"

PROVE in your ACTIONS that you are putting our health first ALWAYS!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kristi Lee Higuchi-Delos Santos
Resident of Mililani, Hawaii for 41 years, Resident of the State of Hawaii for 51 years

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Zellie Kamahele <zelliek@icloud.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

"Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." Zellie Kamahele, special teacher, Kailua Intermediate, kids at elementary schools in the area. The idea that 3 feet is even being considered is disgusting. The numbers are rising of infected people and deaths. Why would you think 3 feet will solve anything when the entire 5 months it has been suggested to be 6 feet with masks. You want teachers, students, and families to expect safety, but where is the safety without a requirement to wear masks and be 6 feet apart. Think about it, 1 person can spread it like wild fire, we are seeing this in most states, don't risk students and teachers health for 3 feet.

Zellie Kamahele

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Darren Kojima <dkojima2002@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please reconsider the 3ft social distance requirement. Even though the students all face in the same direction, 3ft is not enough. I teach in a portable so we will be in a somewhat enclosed area. I really do not feel comfortable returning to school, especially if the distance will be only 3 ft. I have a father at home who is 92 and a mother who is 87. I fear that I may contract the virus and bring it home to them. Again, please consider increasing the distance from 3 ft to 6 ft. In fact, since I teach at a high school, I would like to see 100% long distance learning.

Thank you.

Darren Kojima
Secondary math teacher
Leilehua High School.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

cynthia acierto <cynthiaacierto84@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Cynthia Busque and I am speaking as both a teacher and an aunty. My own children are no longer in school -- but I would like to also testify on behalf of my nieces and nephews who are currently attending school around Oahu. I teach at Aliamanu Elementary and my nieces/nephews attend Holomua Elementary Schol and Kaleiopuu Elementary School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I have been an educator for 30+ years in Hawaii. For 25 of those years, I have taught students grades Kindergarten to 2nd grade. For the past 15 years, I have taught first graders. As anyone who has been around 6 year olds knows, young children cannot resist being close to their friends (and foes) during the school day. Along with that, they have not accurately gained control of their own bodily functions, specifically coughing and sneezing.

My school says that we can fit up to 16 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

Being placed in this type of scenario will mean that we will be forced to spend an abundant amount of time monitoring and diffusing the situation of keeping their hands to themselves and staying in their own space -- and hopefully not coughing, sneezing or even speaking directly to another person. The recommendation by the DOE is that children not be required to wear masks in the classroom.

I take offense at the statement made by "Dr." Bruce Anderson who publicly stated that it would be fine to return to school -- keep the kids socially distanced while maintaining minimal movement between classes and public spaces. After all, he said, what's the worst that could happen -- someone could test positive!! -- He also went on to say that it would be the most ideal situation because it would be easy to contact trace!! Thank you for considering the lives of our children and me -- the teacher. Would it be okay, "DR" Anderson if your son, daughter, granddaughter, grandson, niece, nephew were in that classroom??? Shame on you for not placing value on people's lives!!!

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as an aunt. I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I think it's fair that children be sent to school that enforces **safe social distancing -- which includes 6 feet distance and REQUIRED MASKS!** With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about children's education, but their safety is priority. We teach our children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn't as careful with social distancing, they are children and don't know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Busque
Aliamanu Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Sir: As a resident of Hawaii, I am writing to voice my concern on the desk distance in our public schools come August 4, 2020. For the safety of the students, their teachers and the public at large, I voice that a minimum of 6 feet be made in the classroom environment. This would be 6 feet all around - side to side facing forward as well as between the row in front and the row in back. Only modified teaching for ALL grade levels or remote learning should be the choices if the 6 feet distance is

ellnjt.wong <ellnjt.wong@hawaiiantel.net>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:28 PM

Without the 6 feet distance it will be only a matter of time before public school education will be done remotely.

One teacher at school catches COVID19 and it will be a chain reaction, where there will not be enough substitute teachers.

Department of Education Superintendent sounded so proud that Hawaii will be the first State in the Nation to open like she is appeasing to open public schools, but at what cost?

We have a good record of keeping safe. Don't want to see our past 3 months change for the worse.

Sincerely,
Laurie Wong (parent of two public school teachers and concerned grandmother)
808 754-2536

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nancy. Miyasato <nmmiyasa@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:34 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a grandmother of a 1st grade student and I am also a retired registered nurse. I have read the comprehensive plan as well as kept up with recommendations from the CDC, other health experts and our local department of health regarding COVID-19 and safe practices. One of the Guiding Principles for lowering risk for students per CDC is to have small classes, to have groups of students stay together and not mix and for students to remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects.

I am very concerned that student's health will be at more risk if students cannot maintain 6 feet distances from each other. They will be in a closed environment for six or more hours. It will be almost impossible for students to not turn and face each for six hours. And studies show that respiratory droplets may even travel farther than six feet.

My granddaughter has respiratory issues and cannot wear a mask for long periods. More people in a classroom means more chances for surfaces to be touched by students before cleaning takes place.

I don't understand why all other institutions establish a maximum amount of people that can be in a room and space people apart yet the department of education is willing to compromise and dilute what is safer practices.

PLEASE FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES AND PLACE STUDENT DESKS AT LEAST 6 FEET APART.

Sincerely, Nancy Miyasato

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ken Sato <knjsato7565@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:45 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@BOE.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To: Board of Education

I am a parent and I cannot believe what is happening in our schools. I am scared out of my mind for my kids. Covid is real and I'm tired of people saying kids are safe. Really?? So is the DOE and BOE guaranteeing my child's safety. Research is showing that more children are getting Covid. What about my health? If they contract it then they will bring it home. We have to do everything in our power to minimize the risk. So are we really protecting our students and teachers by allowing this ridicules 3 feet distancing. It is irresponsible of the DOE to allow this. My child catches a cold almost every month from school. Children do not know how to social distance and that is a fact. If anyone of you have children at home, please have them sit for 7 hours without turning to the side. Their bodies and heads will turn. We need the 6 feet or even more to protect them. Make the schools figure it out and I bet if you mandate it, they will do it. Why is school and tourism opening at the same time? School should not be reopening so soon. Just today, the DOH said the community spread is so wide spread. Please look at the website. In just one day, 11 different communities. Protect my child and their hard working teachers!! As BOE members, you have a duty to do what's best for our children. Honestly, I do not have too much respect and faith in the states department of health. How is that they are the ones dictating what distance is correct? We need to follow national guidelines and not something our DOH makes up.

Thank you,

Ken S.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Joanna Wright <joannaw@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am very concerned about the DOE's statement that 3 feet of distance between desks is sufficient if students are facing the same direction. For one thing, this contradicts the agreement in the MOU already made with HSTA. For another thing, it goes against CDC recommendations for safe practice. The fact that students are facing the same direction will not make insufficient space safe. It is highly unlikely that all students will keep their masks on consistently, and, being children, they will frequently turn to talk to and/or touch their neighbors who are only 3 feet away. At least one school is proposing shower curtains between seats that are insufficiently spaced in order to reduce risk. While I appreciate the effort, it will not fix the problem. A shower curtain will provide another surface on which germs can collect, while blocking air circulation and making it harder for germs in the air to dissipate. Or, if there is an air conditioner blowing or a breeze from an open window, shower curtains could flap around, making them completely ineffective and potentially spreading germs. When seated in a classroom, students are together for quite a long time, which increases risk. Everything possible needs to be done to keep that risk low. A minimum distance of 6 feet must be maintained.

I appreciate the need to get students into the classroom as much as possible, but doing that unsafely will defeat the purpose. If we see disease transmission in our schools, we will have to shut down completely again, and then they won't get any in-class time. Besides that, we are risking the health of our students and their families. Some students are high-risk, and many of them depend on parents or grandparents who are high-risk. Spreading COVID-19 to these people, on whom students depend, as a consequence of giving students time in the classroom, will result in a net harm to our students. Not only are students and families at risk, but teachers are at risk as well. In the best case scenario, a teacher who contracts COVID-19 will miss at least 3 weeks of work. In the worst case, which will sometimes happen, the teacher will die. We already have a teacher shortage in Hawaii--we cannot afford to lose any teachers. Please require the DOE to maintain 6 feet of spacing between desks.

Thank you for your consideration,
Joanna Wright
Roosevelt High School Teacher, mom of student at Voyager Public Charter School
808-286-7994
joannaw@hawaii.edu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

tanya park <parkt013@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 8:53 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My name is Tanya Park and I am a special education teacher and mother of 2 public elementary school students.
We live in a multi generational home with my in laws who are in their 70's, my mother in law is at particular risk due to being a cancer survivor, triple bypass survivor and multiple health issues. We also give respite care to my niece who is profoundly disabled and at very high risk of death if she gets covid 19.
I am very worried about returning to the classroom if safety measures are not enforced. I believe the only way I would feel even slightly comfortable returning is if the 6 feet of social distancing is upheld, masks are required, daily temperature checks and health screenings and sanitary/cleaning measures are implemented.
Please do not waver on these safety protocols, you are risking my health, my students health and my families health.
If these measures cannot be put in place by August 4th then we should look at a delay in the start of the school year or continue distance learning.
Thank you for your consideration.
Tanya Park
Kapunahala Elementary School, Kaneohe
Get Outlook for Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Iris Yamamoto <iris.yamamoto@wilsonschoolhawaii.org> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:05 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Iris Yamamoto and I am a teacher at Wilson Elementary School. My own son attends Wilson as well and as much as I am anxious for him to return to school, I am extremely hesitant to do so with the 3-foot distance between desks. Children are naturally social beings, so we are all going to be in for a challenge to teach them how to social distance. We need much more guidance in creating the CDC recommended 6-feet distance between desks. Our school has been dedicating our summer to countless meetings to prepare for this upcoming school year because we WANT our keiki back to school. But we all need to be safe and healthy in order for school to actually run and function. I am honestly quite tired of hearing recommendations of individual schools to just figure things out. We need strong leadership and direction from the DOE. As stated by Corey Rosenlee, we are not and I refuse to be a sacrificial lamb in order for our schools to reopen. If stores, shopping malls, and other places of business can strictly enforce 6 feet social distancing measures, then schools need to follow suit. I want to do my job. I want my son to go back to school. But we can't risk our health while doing so.

Please provide more support and guidance for us.

With deepest gratitude,
Iris

--
Iris Yamamoto
Wilson Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Keao Sunaoka <keaosunaoka@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(a): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for re-opening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." I'm a parent of two grade school children, aged 7 and 9. My youngest daughter attended Kaneohe Elementary Schools. My husband is also a substitute teacher and I work in science education, previously at Maryknoll High School and currently in the Biology Department of the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

The Hawaii Department of Education's proposal to reduce desks and distancing to just 3 feet apart is both scientifically unsound and a threat to the statewide and national efforts to curb and reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and prevent our community in Hawaii from the risks of COVD.

The 3 foot recommendation is an outdated metric that was based upon pathogens like bacterial meningitis and rhinovirus colds. But in the early 200s, health workers were infected by another coronavirs, SARS-CoV-2 and studies discovered that viral droplets were spreading 2 meters (~6 feet). Even then, this is not foolproof as viral particles have been found even farther away, but why the CDC recommends at least 6 feet distancing. To endanger teachers and fellow children by blatantly ignoring these studies is scientifically unsound and a clear indicator that budget is the main concern, and not the health of our children and our underpaid teachers.

The second issue is the conflicting message this sends to our children and our state as a whole. US has currently locked down the number one spot of COVID cases and shows now sign of decline in case number. Other countries who have reduced their numbers to manageable to minimal numbers credit it to a cohesive and consistent presentation of their strategy. Their community is hearing a consistent message and have more trust because of that. After months of encouraging Hawaii residents to wear a mask and stay 6 feet away from others, what is the message you are now trying to say? What impact will this have as we look to the future and await to see if we become another California or Arizona? As educators, what are you teaching our children and their parents?

I personally would prefer to keep my child at home as I do not want to be responsible for endangering the health and lives of our teachers by placing them in overcrowded classrooms with insufficient distancing in place. I also question that adequate sanitation will be in place. My friend has children at Campbell High School and she has been fighting to have hand soap placed into the school bathrooms. It has been years and there has been no hand soap provided to students. She sends her kids to school with their own hand soap and they've been sharing with friends. This is an outrage and a public health issue.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I have also attached a link on the social distancing guidelines.

Keao Sunaoka

https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/is-6-feet-far-enough-for-social-distancing-heres-what-science-says

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristina Kawakami <kristina.kawakami@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:20 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Kristina Kawakami and I am a teacher at Mililani ‘Ike Elementary School and I am writing to express my concern about the lack of physical distancing. My principal proposed a plan where all students Pre-K through 5 are on campus full time face to face. Even with the best plans and procedures the likelihood of students being closer than 6 feet is almost certain!

I am at higher risk myself due to being diagnosed with an autoimmune condition called Lupus which affects my immune system. I am extremely concerned about being exposed to so many students each day and in such close proximity.

This is a ticking time bomb waiting to go off. Imagine how quickly Covid will spread in our school community. The leaders of our schools are treating this like an experiment without consequences. The phrase “better safe than sorry” should be applied here and 6 foot distancing should be implemented before the death of a staff member or student occurs!

It’s a sad state of affairs when Costco cares more about our safety and social distancing than our employer does!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Aimee Marie Garo <garo.aimee11@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Aimee Garo and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Mililani Uka Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. My school says that we can fit up to 30 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stays put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom, we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. Additionally, if the public is recommended to maintain 6ft social distancing per the Center of Disease Control to contain the spread of the virus, why are we told not to follow that in our classroom? If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, but it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Aimee Garo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristin Aiona <kristin_aiona@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Kristin Aiona, and I teach at Hilo High School in Hilo, Hawaii. My two children attend EB Desilva School. My class sizes this year are upwards to 28-29 students. For my children, EB Desilva is such a full school that they do not have enough classrooms for all the students.

Students in school classrooms and on school grounds NEED to be 6 feet apart. Adolescents often times cannot control their bodily functions, including sneezing, coughing, spitting, drooling, and many other bodily functions. In fact, they turn their heads and sneeze right on their peer who is sitting 3 feet away from them. Adolescents still dig their noses and wipe their boogers on other kids. If they are 6 feet apart, they are less likely that students will sneeze on, cough on, or put their boogers on another student.

If students are less than 6 feet apart, we are putting ourselves and our children in the high-risk category to catch and transmit COVID-19.

The CDC guidelines state that :
-More Risk: Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).

-Highest Risk: Full-sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

Are we willing to put ourselves and our children in the highest risk category? I'm sure as heck not. I haven't been isolating in my home with my two children to only send them to school to be 3 feet away from another child.

Would we say to our families and our haumana that you are at high risk to catch COVID-19, but it is acceptable to go out and eat at a restaurant or attend a movie in a movie theatre and not have to social distance 6 feet away from someone else, but you will still be at high risk to catch COVID-19, but that is ok?

You cannot say to the general public to stay 6 feet apart from someone, and then all of a sudden, because we are in the classroom, with limited choices and limited funding, say that people do not have to stay 6 feet away from each other. That is not logical and it is wrong.

SIX FEET AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. That's how we social distance.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Wynn Oshiro <wynn.oshiro@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." I am Wynn Oshiro, teaching at Waipahu Intermediate School, with a son attending Kalani High School. I implore the BOE and DOE to mandate the 6-foot social distancing in our schools in compliance with the CDC recommendation in order to reduce coronavirus spread. Please do not minimize safety precautions for children and staff. Our health and our lives are at risk. Thank you.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet distance is NOT OK

Kaipolani Lorenzo <coriann.lorenzo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 9:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing this email in regards to the guideline of having a 3 foot distance between desks/students in the classroom. I am very concerned with this guideline as it does NOT follow the CDC guideline of 6 feet. How are schools any different than any other public space?

It is not feasible for schools to have a 3 foot distance when we are not practicing that same rule elsewhere. This specific guideline puts our students, staff, and families at more risk in catching the COVID-19 virus. There is a higher chance of the virus spreading if this guideline doesn't change.

I believe more parents will not want their child to attend school. Teachers will be even more fearful to come to school as well. I don't know the reason behind the change from 6 feet to 3 feet, however the idea is intolerable and unfair for everyone on every school campus.

I plead with you to follow the CDC guidelines, and not make up your own guidelines in regards to social distancing in a school setting. Our numbers are low for a reason. Our Hawai'i community has adhered to all the recommendations from the CDC thus far, and I believe that is one of the main factors for our numbers being low. The 3 feet distance in the classroom will contribute to more cases if someone were to contract the virus and then come to campus.

Staff who are at high-risk will be more vulnerable and it is unfair to them if you keep this guideline. It is also unfair to families who have high-risk individuals at home. Please think of your own families. How would you feel if someone in your family contracted the virus at a school due to not being 6 feet a part from others. CDC put the 6 foot distance as a guideline for a reason, scientific evidence!

Therefore, please make the change. It will save lives!

Sincerely,
Cori-Ann Lorenzo
Secondary Teacher

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Sharon Matsusaka-Brewer and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Solomon Elementary and my children attend Mililani High School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students.

My school says that we can fit up to 26 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my children to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children’s education, but their safety is priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Sharon Matsusaka-Brewer

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

DOE reopening plans

Mitchell Walker <mitch11444@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 12:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

6 feet are the cdc guidelines, not 3 feet.

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Peter Rossman <rossman_khs@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 12:53 AM
Reply-To: "rossman_khs@yahoo.com" <rossman_khs@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: Discussion item VI(a) on reopening schools

Aloha, I am Peter Rossman, an educator for Kealakehe High and a parent of children attending Kealakehe Intermediate and Holualoa Elementary schools.

If the CDC-recommended social distancing guideline of 6 feet can not be implemented in public schools by ourselves, then we could invite OSHA for assistance. It has been done in the mainland already, so it can be done in Hawaii, and it will be done if we don't figure it out.

Let's solve this while following the federal distancing mandate. Hawaii educators have been successfully practicing distance learning for an entire quarter. Please have faith in us and our online pedagogy while we all wait for an effective vaccine. Safety for all means no needless death or lifelong injury from a single cough.

Thank you all and a hui hou kakou!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Holly808Books Usborne <holly808books@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 2:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Dear Hawaii DOE,
I am testifying as both a parent of 2 elementary students and as a teacher at an elementary school on Maui.
I am horrified by the current proposal of my school as well as the backtracking you have done on social distancing. Hawaii public schools are going to be a national guinea pig in school reopening. My school has no change to the schedule, and we will see every student every day, all day. Students will only be seated 3 feet apart if possible and not wearing masks if facing forward. How does this make any sense?
There seems to be some misinformation that students do not catch, or spread coronavirus. This is not true and not at all based on science- there seems to be a convenient narrative to push schools to completely reopen for childcare purposes but without regard to staff or student health.
What will happen when staff starts to become seriously ill or die? What will happen when children start to develop the inflammatory disease associated with covid? Or they bring it home to their kupuna and they pass away?
I think most people agree that face to face learning is preferable, but at this time it is not safe. Students and staff should be at home learning through high quality, individualized and personal online instruction.
I do not want my girls in school. I am seriously considering if I need to resign to ensure my family is safe and protected. Much of our country is shutting back down, we are banned from traveling to Europe, our governor has even told us not to travel- yet we are inviting mass tourism back the same week schools are to reopen? It is insanity.
Your job is to ensure that students and staff are safe! Students can receive a quality education online from their teachers this first semester. How many staff and student deaths are you willing to say are acceptable? 10? 100? How about permanent lung damage? Or organ failure in mild cases? Sudden strokes or heart attacks in young teachers on campus? How will that impact students, having teachers and staff severely ill and dying? How will it impact staff and students to lose children to the virus?
At the minimum students should be REQUIRED to wear masks, and be 6 feet apart. Otherwise what you are offering is a farce. You can wash hands all day long (for those teachers that actually have sinks), but for an airborne illness it is ludicrous to not require masks which would catch droplets before they spread in the air and onto surfaces. I am constantly being sneezed on and coughed on directly in my face by unaware students.
Please REQUIRE masks, mandate 6 feet of distancing, and ideally offer online learning full time. Accomodations can be made for SPED or vulnerable students to attend face to face if needed, but the vast majority of staff and students should be home in a safe learning environment. This model can be changed if infection spread is not rampant once increased tourism resumes.
Hawaii has become known nationally for the low Covid-19 cases, I fear they will soon also be known for a massive educational failure to prevent outbreaks at schools.
Protect our staff and keiki.
Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.
Mahalo,
Holly Lee

ps- here are a few short articles about kids and Covid:

Texas Daycare outbreak: https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/?utm_campaign=trib-social-buttons&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR1afezg7JBTH4P5U4tGz7QcBSapUP4Y9mXEwm20USo3zh1VP_F6dWWvI2Y

Children DO transmit Covid: https://www.nbc12.com/2020/07/01/study-children-can-transmit-covid-like-adults/?fbclid=IwAR0w1JN1SB0gp03XvzKBJfPRASbBEoOnXuVqOwplzqFsvqVc6p4Glk_aNDY

MIS-C in children (inflammatory disease triggered by Covid): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/infographic-mis-c.html?fbclid=IwAR2fC9GO8J-9WLyKfT8kmHnKCjHMYmKOOFjQnva7p_bB2YvI6otZ2Ny_Usk

Masks are necessary!: https://www.pnas.org/content/117/26/14857?fbclid=IwAR3SKy0jkFVNNyuLckW5Q-ZpTdqDBPXAJ_P0C-6QCdJh7EuQU8BIsfwPqco

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Usborne Educational Consultant
Maui's Online Children's Bookstore
K4230.myubam.com
Changing Children's Lives, One Book at a Time…….

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rosemarie Bayari Holi <rosecbay@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 5:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

Please reconsider your guidance on distance between student desks from 3 feet to 6 feet. It is imperative to ensure we keep our students and staff safe during these unprecented times. Why would we go against the CDC recommendations are jeopardize the welfare of our students and ourselves? Have you been in a classroom lately amd experience the difficulty students have with basics of covering their mouths and keeping their hands to themselves? We need to rely the collaboration if BOE, DOE and HSTA, the teachers and staff guidance to keep the classroom environment safe for all.

We need to be PRO-ACTIVE and eliminate possibilities of sickness rather than being reactive as the sickness occurs.

Please reconsider, I am asking as a parent and a teacher. Mahalo for your time.

Thank you,
Rose Bayari-Holi

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Cid Chun <cidchun@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 6:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Cynthia Chun and I am speaking as a teacher / educator of 22 years. I have been a classroom teacher as well as a curriculum coordinator and International Baccalaureate middle school coordinator. Currently I teach 8th grade English at Waialua High and Intermediate School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between teens to keep a safe distance from each other. Nor am I confidentt on the mask protocols put forward. I am concerned with the language used by the state that allows compromises on the CDC's recommendations. As a 62 year old teacher who has survived cancer and is living with Hashimoto's syndrome (an autoimmune disease) and therefore have a compromised immune system, I feel very strongly that ALL teachers and students should be supported by providing a 100% safe as possible environment.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and care for our teachers, staff, and students should mandate that all teachers are supplied with thermometers. This also goes for sanitation supplies. The last weeks of Q3 last year, our classrooms had issues with the student classroom cleaners being much less than thorough. This was combined with no supplies sent to the school by the state. I spent my own money for cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer. I saw on the news that our state legislature has not supplied ANY additional funds for sanitizing. Does this mean our principals are spending money that should be used for instruction on cleaning supplies?

With these unprecedented times, and the entire world watching as the USA fails at being a leader in dealing with this virus, shouldn't we be more mindful moving forward? Better safe than sorry, especially when lives are clearly at stake.

Warmest aloha,
Cynthia (Cid) Chun
808 206-3071

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

In support of 3 feet

Jamie Coulter <jamiecoulter2000@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 7:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I want to teach all my students. I'm ok with three feet.

Sent from my iPhone

July 4, 2020

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. First, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I am sure you are receiving lots of input. I want to address the most recent comments by Superintendent Christina Kishimoto as she unveiled the "Return to Learn" plan for Hawai'i to the media on Thursday, July 2nd. As a teacher who has been in the classroom for over fifteen years, I believe I bring a depth of experience. With this experience, I can tell you first hand that younger elementary students are not going to be able to sit for long periods (more than five or ten minutes) facing forward, while also not looking to the left or right or behind them. The original goal of having six feet of separation, as outlined in the MOU between the State and HSTA, takes this fact into account. By decreasing the spacing between students, what protection are we offering to the students?

In my years of education, I have watched teachers pour out their own money to help step into budget crises, pour out their time when classrooms have become overloaded with students with high needs, and pour out their love year after year. With the current pandemic still raging in parts of mainland USA, and with trans-pacific travel starting up for Hawai'i just before school begins, I feel as if teachers are now being called to pour out their health in the name of education.

Lastly, I would like to say that the current philosophy of creating bubbles or little ohanas in the elementary school level does not make sense to me. Individual students are still interacting with many different populations at various times, both at school and in their home life. As such, I am concerned about the Superintendent's comment that 3 feet of distance will be sufficient. I am also worried that there has not been a mandate regarding wearing protective face gear, even clear face shields, to provide a safe environment for either the students or myself in the lower elementary. On Friday, July 3rd, *The Garden Island* newspaper reported that one student had been confirmed with COVID-19 among the current cluster outbreak we are having on the island. As a result of this one student, Kekaha's whole summer program went online. This information does not bode well. Students can and sadly do contract this virus, which means I have 24 students who can potentially be carriers of the virus in my room. Yet unlike other businesses or

government employees, the children and myself will not be protected by the 6-foot physical distancing requirement or the mask mandate. If we do not have these basic protections that most public employees are being given, how are we to protect ourselves? If one is to say we will still have handwashing and proper hygiene, then I would ask them if they have spent much time around seven and eight-year-olds. I continually have to ask students not to pick their noses, go back and wash their hands after using the bathroom, and cough/sneeze in their elbow or a tissue instead of all over their desk or their neighbor's desk, which wouldn't happen if they were wearing a face mask or face shield.

I know that multiple sources at the state level have said that it is a struggle for younger students to wear masks and that it blocks social cues. As a teacher and a mom, I would like to respond to this. Yes, children need to see my face and each other's face! That is why I am recommending a clear face shield for both myself and the students. While face shields are not as protective as masks, they still offer some protection and also allow students to see each other. In regards to discomfort or not being able to do a cover, I can tell you that my son, who just finished kindergarten, is doing a county summer fun program right now. Part of the requirements for this program is that every child must wear a mask, not a face shield, but a cloth mask ALL day, which is 7:45 am-4:30 pm. The first day he didn't like the idea of having to wear the mask, but when he learned he could take it off while running outside, he was ok with the fact that he was required to wear it the rest of the day. If my super active six-year-old son can do the mask, I know it is possible to ask lower elementary students to wear at least a face shield, so please stop sidestepping this critical aspect of protection. Kauai's mayor has been saying since April that, "My mask protects you and your mask protects me. It is a sign of aloha and respect." Please show teachers the aloha and respect we have earned over our years of working with students. Please protect us as we work to protect the keikis.

Thank you,
Danielle Bryant
Kapa'a Elementary, 2nd Grade

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sara Vienna <saraelizabethvienna@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 7:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

Regarding Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year,” I urge the committee to follow CDC guidelines and require schools to space children throughout their day by 6 feet, NOT 3 feet.

Please keep our keiki as safe as possible by following common sense and social distancing. We should not allow schools to pack kids in just because it's easier. There are more ways we can decrease class sizes including 100% work from home, and one day on one day off, to allow this to happen. I also support a 1 day a week teacher's work day so they can support children doing remote work and decrease their exposure.

Thank you!

Sara Vienna
Aikahi Elementary School Parent
(Not an educator)

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimomy. ... Aloha our hard working directors

Barrow Hutchison <barrowh@kppcs.org> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 7:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: "Daugherty, Maia" <mdaugherty@hsta.org>, Phil Centers <philc@kppcs.org>

Regarding Discussion Item VI (a):

I question the safety for staff and children when I read the DOE comprehensive plan for reopening of schools.
As presented, we will not have adequate physical distancing in the classroom, in my opinion!!

Wm. Barrow Hutchison
Kona Pacific Public Charter School
SpEd.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony re: 6 feet apart

Lori <lorimisaka@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 8:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My testimony relates to Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.
As a parent who has children at Mililani ʻIke Elementary School, Mililani Middle School and Mililani High School, I strongly urge you to reconsider the requirement of distancing our keiki desks only 3 feet apart. I am already concerned about the spike in COVID cases in our community, and know how hard it is to maintain physical distancing and enforce mask wearing as a teacher who is currently teaching a hybrid summer class at Waipahu High School. Please update the guidance to meet CDC guidelines of 6 feet apart, which is the norm in all businesses and other places which have reopened.
Mahalo for your consideration of this important matter.
Aloha,
Lori Misaka

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Decision item VI(A): 2020-2021 reopening school plans

Gavin <gavyzf@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:09 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Gavin I, children go to Liholiho school.
We need very strict distancing for the entire school system! CDC says at least 6 ft distancing, so what don't you understand what 6 ft distance is. Half the distance double the trouble! Use your BRAIN'S! There needs to be more safety protocol in place to make it safe for everyone at every school! Think CHILDREN SAFETY, over any financial cost!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for July 9th BOE Meeting

Caroline Freudig <carolinefreudig@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:29 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding:
Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Aloha Board of Education Chair & Members,

As a public school first grade teacher on Kaua'i, a grandmother of a 4 year old, the Kaua'i HSTA chapter president and a Kalaheo community member, I am deeply concerned about the DOE reopening plan for our 20-21 school year.

HSTA has worked tirelessly ever since this pandemic started to ensure that our students & teachers would be safe. The MOU that was agreed upon by both DOE & HSTA outlines specific ways that our students & teachers could return to school on August 4th in a safe way, however, the DOE reopening seems to have language that contradicts what's in our agreed upon MOU.

The DOE has stated under their "Health & Safety" section that "In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a *cohort* or *bubble*, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask. Facial recognition and expressions are very important social cues in a child's development. A classroom full of mask-wearing students may cause unhealthy anxiety for students." The document also states that "Masks should be worn when keeping six feet apart is not possible, or when children face each other and interact in similar ways. However, if students are sitting three feet apart, and facing the same way, wearing a mask is not required."

While I completely agree that we want our students to return to school feeling safe and that we don't wish to cause anxiety, I question the logic of no face masks if 3 feet apart facing front, especially for our younger students. Do we really expect that our students won't get out of their seats? Has anyone in the DOE making these decisions been in a first grade classroom for the day recently? Try as we might as teachers and try as they might as students, they will inevitably overlap with one another. At minimum, a face covering such as a clear face shield should be required by everyone and if the children & teachers want further protection, they can wear their mask under the face shield.

This language and contradiction with what was agreed upon between the DOE & MOU is completely unacceptable. Is the DOE not seeing the rise in cases? Do they expect that when tourism opens further in August that our residents will be safer with more travellers? I'm truly perplexed by many of the items listed in the reopening document as they will put our students and teachers at risk of possibly contracting COVID-19.

Recently on Kaua'i, there was a COVID-19 case identified with a student at the Kekaha Elementary School Summer Learning Hub program. As a result, the school's summer program has shifted from in-person to distance learning. A teacher who is working at the summer program posted on Facebook that she and others did not contract COVID-19 even though they were exposed due to the strict safety requirements they followed. We need that for all of our students & teachers in all of our schools.

I urge you to require the DOE to modify their reopening plan to ensure safety for all of our students & teachers.

Mahalo,
Caroline Freudig
Kaua'i

Safety Concerns

Jennifer Kramer <jenkramerteacher@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Personnel,

I am feeling very troubled about the recent interview with Superintendent Kishimoto, Department of Health Director Anderson, and Dr. Park. I felt so upset when they described our classrooms as “ohana bubbles.” When I think of “ohana,” I think of the love we have for our families. By extending the term to the classroom as a justification for ignoring safety precautions, we are actually putting children, their families, teachers, and their families, at risk of serious disease or death.

At a time when Mayor Caldwell has mandated masks inside, the only exception seems to be in classrooms. We’ve been told that masks could take away from the DOE’s mission to “give hope, act with kindness, and work toward togetherness.” Again, I feel like kind words are being used to mask a terrible reality—that these practices that could literally directly result in serious illness or death. We’ve been told that plexiglass dividers and other physical barriers could also incite fear in children and should not be used.

Director Anderson and Dr. Park recommended distancing children 3 feet apart instead of the recommendation everywhere else of 6 feet. No matter how far apart we place them, our youngest students will have a hard time staying in one place—so they require at least as much distance as the general population to be safe.

While temperature checks are mandated in other high-risk places, we will be crowding together 500+ children per day in many schools, with no temperature checks. Please reconsider. Temperature checks are just one more layer of the many things we can do to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Ventilation is discussed in the CDC guidelines. What if air conditioners stay on all day, and we cannot open doors? Scientific studies indicate this would be unsafe. Please look into filters or ionic air purifiers to make our classrooms safer.

Finally, I was honestly shocked when Dr. Park said that if children were found to have Covid-19 during a long weekend, contact tracing (which I assume means notifying the school, teacher, and children in the class) would not be necessary. The illness has up to a 14-day incubation period. This simply does not make sense.

I feel that these safety issues could become a legal issue for the DOE and the and the Department of Health. What if a child became infected and infected his or her family? I’m concerned that parents could become upset to find out that masks, adequate social distancing, and physical barriers were discouraged; temperature checks were not done; air conditions were on all day with no filters; and no one would have been notified if other children in the class were found to have Covid-19, e.g., over a long weekend.

I feel so much fear to come back to school—for myself, my family, my students, their families, and our islands. I urge the BOE to consider ways to protect ohanas, give hope, act with kindness, and work toward togetherness while implementing many layers of safety measures so that children have families to come home to.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Kramer

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tehane perry <tperry76@hawaii.rr.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a parent of an incoming 3rd grader, I feel the proposal for positioning desks less than the CDC recommendation of 6 feet is completely ignorant. The 6 feet rule has been pushed in businesses, state and county buildings simply put; in general yet the D.O.E finds it “safe” to propose desks be positioned at a distance of 3 feet.

I’m disappointed that this would even be in the D.O.E’s realm of thinking and highly recommend you reconsider. If this follows through, I will not be sending my child to school and will seek alternate sources of learning.

Thank you kindly,
Andrea Perry
Kaua’i resident- Kalaheo Elementary school

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet

tammy kuwahara <takemimk@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Please remember and take to account ALL of the CDC guidelines given to help ensure the health and safety of all parties. It is not comforting at all to think that the BOE is willing to put our lives in harms way-not only the teachers and students but all the families as well. I myself have 3 children that attend public schools and with the guidelines made that are NOT in the best interest of everyone on the frontline is disappointing. I really hope that a decision can be made where we all feel safe and willing to go back to school.

Thank You!
Tammy Kuwahara
Pu'u Kukui Elementary
BHS Maui

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

More thoughts

Lori Nelson <lorinelson53@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:48 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

This was a comment I made replying to my daughter, who is understandably concerned about the state's decision that despite any reasonable comprehension of the implications of our rising case count, her mom will be back in class:

"They wouldn't have the right (and I would hate going to work) for a million dollars! *Soldiers* sign up to risk their lives for peanuts, for whatever reasons they have to do so. I do not have that gene. I will fight to the death for my offspring, and sorry, but anyone else's offspring are anyone else's problem. Bad enough I know we will all die if a shooter comes to my classroom. But we don't invite shooters in! By re-opening under current conditions, we are inviting death into our classrooms."

And a comment to a friend who recommends PPE:

"I have cloth ones [masks] that I made that have HEPA filter disposable inserts. I have shoes that will never leave the classroom. I have purchased face shields, and gloves to use, and also aprons that I would rather not use—I want gowns. Principal has "a few" gowns and will reimburse "up to $100" for PPE. That will buy me six weeks' worth of cheap, crappy disposable gowns, or three weeks' worth of decent ones that won't tear if I raise my arm wrong, or 2.5 re-usable cloth gowns."

Not sufficient, not safe, please delay re-opening as promised, until their are ZERO new cases for fourteen days.

Mahalo,
Lori Jane Nelson
PreK special education inclusion
Makaha Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY for Discussion Item VI(A)

Debbie Olive <readinggirlme@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:57 AM

Re: "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Deborah Olive and I am a second grade teacher at Keaau Elementary School on the Big Island. I am writing to express my concerns about the Hawaii State Department of Education's policy allowing students' desks to be as close as three feet to each other in classrooms when school resumes in August.

The success we have had on the Big Island for minimizing the number of COVID-19 cases is due to the fact that many of us are abiding by CDC guidelines for social distancing - 6 feet distance with protective face wear - in social settings. School is a social setting, as such the guidelines should not be altered.

I am not sure why the DOE is adjusting the CDC guidelines in our schools. If allowed - then DOE should be responsible for any adverse consequences to health and safety of students and teachers.

Mahalo,
Deborah Olive

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

leeannm@hawaii.rr.com <leeannm@hawaii.rr.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.**

Students need to be spaced 6 feet or more apart! Why should the rules differ from what cdc recommends?

I think the students should be kept home & the use of computers(zoom) and/or maybe television stations could help put classes on so that they don't need to go to school. It would be safer for everyone! Or students take turns going to school. Or Hold Classes outside under covered areas.

Although my kids already graduated from school, having kids go back to school will increase the chances of spreading covid throughout the community. Especially if methods against cdc will be used.

Kids may infect other kids, teachers, parents. Parents may infect coworkers, other family members, people in stores, post office, etc!

Please stay safe & keep the schools safe!

LeeAnn Muranaka

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jenny Hazama <jennyhazama@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I am testifying as a retired teacher from the Department of Education.

As a former primary (kindergarten and first grade) classroom teacher, I would like to comment on the 3 feet distance between children. The Center for Disease Control recommends keeping a distance of 6 feet as a safe distance from each other. Yet, the Hawaii State Department of Health suggests a lower safety distance of 3 feet in the classroom. Young children are naturally social and active. They learn by listening, talking, and doing hands on learning related to the concepts and skills they are studying in school. Within this COVID-19 situation the children need to be allowed enough space to engage actively in learning; keeping a 3 feet distance between desks is impractical for the learner. A 3 feet distance between students is not the safest environment for the children or the teacher either. Higher institutions of learning will be maintaining 6 feet distancing in their classrooms so we should be doing the same for the youngest children as well. I know we all want the best education for our students, but the schools shouldn’t have to risk the health and safety of the children or teachers to do so. Proper 6 feet social distancing has helped to reduce the spread of the virus in Hawaii.

Also, I believe it would be wise to require that the children wear face masks at school, unless they have a health condition that prevents them from doing so. Recent reports have shown that the wearing of face masks has also contributed to reducing the spread of the virus in Hawaii.

In summary, could the Hawaii State Department of Health and other authorities reconsider the classroom guidelines so that schools can provide a safe 6 feet social distancing and require the wearing of face masks for all. If everyone does their part, our schools can continue to be safe and healthy places to learn.

Sincerely,
Jenny Hazama

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Huntlee Rita <huntleerita8@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I'm Huntlee and I'm 8 years old.
I feel like the more we distance ourselves from others
the more we protect our community.
I will keep staying 6 feet away to help others and myself.
Can you help me stay safe by keeping our desks 6 feet apart?

Mahalo,
Huntlee Rita

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

DESKS SHOULD BE 6 FT APART-

Amelia Echeverria <amelyperu@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:20 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Amelia Echeverria and I believe we need to make sure our students should be seated 6 FT apart.

I am a teacher in the state of Hawaii and I am worried about the DOE's idea to allow students to be seated only 3 feet apart. COVID-19 is a dangerous virus and as a teacher, a mother, and a wife, I don't want to be put at risk and put others at risk as well.

Sincerely,

Amelia Echeverria.

From the CDC Website: Know how it spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
    - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
    - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
    - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
    - Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.
    - Avoid close contact
    - - Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
        - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
      - Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don’t live in your household.
        - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
        - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.
        - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Avoid close contact

- Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
    - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don’t live in your household.
    - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
    - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.
    - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick (due to underlying medical conditions) or due to age.

- Just FYI since people are bringing up masks: CDC and age of children for face masks:

- ## Who Should Not Wear a Cloth Face Covering

  Cloth face coverings should not be worn by:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance



Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Trina Nishimura <djhonu@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:19 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Trina Nishimura and I am a general education teacher at Reverend Benjamin Parker Elementary School with a son still attending Kailua High School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 SY.

With the recent spikes in COVID-19 cases, I am increasingly concerned for the safety of my family and myself. My husband, a DOE pre-school special education teacher, and I are already uncomfortable with the fact that we will be returning to the classroom with students. However, hearing that we may have to increase our risk with a 3-foot distance policy, instead of the CDC's recommended 6-foot standard is alarming! It is my understanding that in the **memorandum of understanding**, which was recently signed by HSTA and the state, the agreement is “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by “maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.” If you really care about the health and safety of our students and teachers you will honor the agreement that was made.

Mahalo,

Trina Nishimura

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

leah macleod <leahgarrity@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:22 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

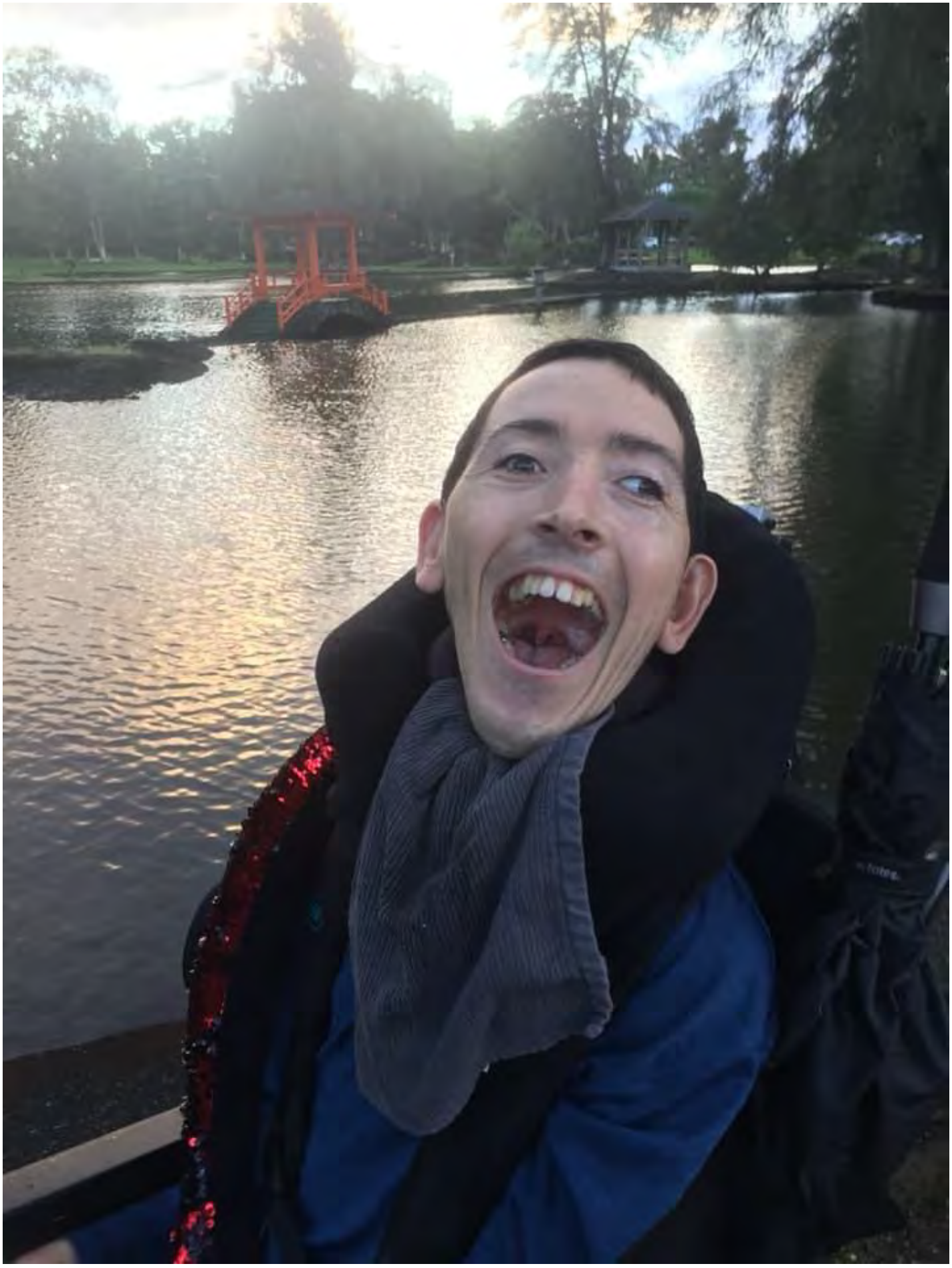
I am a teacher writing to you to express my gravest of concern regarding the 3 feet spacing and lack of mask requirements in my classroom.

Good science and research has proven that we can greatly reduce the spread of Covid through the wearing of masks and social distancing of at least 6 feet. Many teachers in the classroom can tell you that students cough and sneeze in our faces regularly during the instructional day.

Your decision and callousness could possibly cause the death of my severely disabled son should I bring this virus home to him. It would break my heart to pieces knowing I brought this home to him.

Please listen to science not politics. Please help to protect my son and all the other vulnerable members of our community. Their lives are worth saving.

Mahalo,
Leah MacLeod



Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

On classroom distancing.

hawaiibrothers <hawaiibrothers@aol.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern, I am a forty year veteran teacher with the Hawaii Department of Education my name is Charles Manning.
In these uncertain times it becomes apparent that the education of our youth must continue in a safe environment and with due diligence I am hopeful that the students education and the safety of each schools working environment can proceed with the greatest amount of protection for the health and safety of all.
Recently new reports as of
7/4/20 have indicated that the Covid-19 virus may have mutated and become more easily spread among the population.
With that in mind it is also apparent that considerations dealing with the distancing of students should be maintained at the six feet spacing recommended by the CDC and that will also be used by theUniversity of Hawaii.
Certainly now is not the time to make a change to the distance between students in light of the new revolutions as to the possibility of the the virus being able to be spread more easily.
Out of an abundance of caution please let's maintain the very serious recommendations of our national health services the CDC and the epidemiologist Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., NIAID Director who
leads the national efforts to devise effective a comprehensive strategy for combating Covid-19. Now is not the time to stray from the reasoned prevention and safety measures recommend which can easily be adjusted after gathering actual data within the school setting after a period of time once schools have reopened.

Thank You for Your Consideration

Charles Manning

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

hawaiibrothers <hawaiibrothers@aol.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern, I am a forty year veteran teacher with the Hawaii Department of Education my name is Charles Manning.
In these uncertain times it becomes apparent that the education of our youth must continue in a safe environment and with due diligence I am hopeful that the students education and the safety of each schools working environment can proceed with the greatest amount of protection for the health and safety of all.
Recently new reports as of
7/4/20 have indicated that the Covid-19 virus may have mutated and become more easily spread among the population.

With that in mind it is also apparent that considerations dealing with the distancing of students should be maintained at the six feet spacing recommended by the CDC and that will also be used by theUniversity of Hawaii.

Certainly now is not the time to make a change to the distance between students in light of the new revolutions as to the possibility of the the virus being able to be spread more easily.

Out of an abundance of caution please let's maintain the very serious recommendations of our national health services the CDC and the epidemiologist Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., NIAID Director who

leads the national efforts to devise effective a comprehensive strategy for combating Covid-19. Now is not the time to stray from the reasoned prevention and safety measures recommend which can easily be adjusted after gathering actual data within the school setting after a period of time once schools have reopened.

Thank You for Your Consideration

Charles Manning

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet distancing in the classrooms

janaikokim@gmail.com <janaikokim@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

CDC recommends 6 feet distancing between desks in the classrooms. How can you endanger the lives of our students, teachers and families by placing them closer together? 3 feet should NOT be an option! You expect children to face forward for long time periods? Dream on!!!
Superintendent needs to think of a better plan.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony for Discussion Item VI(A)

Marnie Cabral <cabrals3@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 11:03 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I believe the low number of COVID 19 cases in children will be a thing of the past once school resumes and students' desks are spaced at only three feet apart. With the spike of cases worldwide due to the reopening of society, how can you justify this spacing of just three feet? We hear it on the news all the time - it just takes one person to be infected. Do you really want to be on the news as the location of a new cluster due to unsafe conditions? Why are you putting this risk of exposure on the students, teachers, faculty and eventually the family members of all? Should a student get exposed in school, do you think the virus will just stay in school? Of course not! You are now putting the entire family of that student in danger! The same goes for teachers and staff members!
Please change your policy because in these unpredictable times, safety and the health of the student government should be our top priority.

Thank you,
Marnie Cabral

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Kramer <jenkramerteacher@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 11:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Personnel,

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Jennifer Kramer, and I'm a second grade teacher at Keone'ula Elementary.

(Please note this is copied from another letter in which I was unaware of the proper heading.)

I am feeling very troubled about the recent interview with Superintendent Kishimoto, Department of Health Director Anderson, and Dr. Park. I felt so upset when they described our classrooms as “ohana bubbles.” When I think of “ohana,” I think of the love we have for our families. By extending the term to the classroom as a justification for ignoring safety precautions, we are actually putting children, their families, teachers, and their families, at risk of serious disease or death.

At a time when Mayor Caldwell has mandated masks inside, the only exception seems to be in classrooms. We’ve been told that masks could take away from the DOE’s mission to “give hope, act with kindness, and work toward togetherness.” Again, I feel like kind words are being used to mask a terrible reality—that these practices that could literally directly result in serious illness or death. We’ve been told that plexiglass dividers and other physical barriers could also incite fear in children and should not be used.

Director Anderson and Dr. Park recommended distancing children 3 feet apart instead of the recommendation everywhere else of 6 feet. No matter how far apart we place them, our youngest students will have a hard time staying in one place—so they require at least as much distance as the general population to be safe.

While temperature checks are mandated in other high-risk places, we will be crowding together 500+ children per day in many schools, with no temperature checks. Please reconsider. Temperature checks are just one more layer of the many things we can do to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Ventilation is discussed in the CDC guidelines. What if air conditioners stay on all day, and we cannot open doors? Scientific studies indicate this would be unsafe. Please look into filters or ionic air purifiers to make our classrooms safer.

Finally, I was honestly shocked when Dr. Park said that if children were found to have Covid-19 during a long weekend, contact tracing (which I assume means notifying the school, teacher, and children in the

class) would not be necessary. The illness has up to a 14-day incubation period. This simply does not make sense.

I feel that these safety issues could become a legal issue for the DOE and the and the Department of Health. What if a child became infected and infected his or her family? I'm concerned that parents could become upset to find out that masks, adequate social distancing, and physical barriers were discouraged; temperature checks were not done; air conditions were on all day with no filters; and no one would have been notified if other children in the class were found to have Covid-19, e.g., over a long weekend.

I feel so much fear to come back to school—for myself, my family, my students, their families, and our islands. I urge the BOE to consider ways to protect ohanas, give hope, act with kindness, and work toward togetherness while implementing many layers of safety measures so that children have families to come home to.

Finally: Perhaps Punahou can be a guide. Please see their plan here: https://www.punahou.edu/health See P. 8: Temperature checks upon arrival; p. 9: Masks are required; p. 10: They will use thermal scanners, plexiglass barriers, ion emitters in air handling units, and more.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Kramer



Reply Forward

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Kristy Yonamine and I am speaking as a parent of three children who attend Mililani Ike Elementary.

As a parent, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other.

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For the school to be asked to rely on their visual assessments is very frustrating. They are not health professionals and fevers cannot be checked visually. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my children to school. As we learned from this last couple quarters my children struggled from home schooling and they benefited the most from the face to face learning experiences. I feel forced to **NOT** send my children to school if I know the school is **NOT** going to enforce safe social distancing (which should include 6ft distance and required masks). With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children’s education, but their safety is priority. There is no learning experience if your child is sick. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Kristy T. Yonamine

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testemony

teachingwolf@aol.com <teachingwolf@aol.com>
Reply-To: teachingwolf@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 11:20 AM

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I teach at Roosevelt High School**.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.
That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

I believed that this agreement would be honored and was shocked to see Ms. Kishimoto on the news saying that we would only be getting 3 feet between desks.
In my school, I will, given the schedule chosen, have 15 students crammed into a room that will barely have 3 feet distance, if that. I preferred a schedule that allowed for 6 feet of distance, with only 10 students in each of my classes, but the principal went with the other option. I didn't know how this was possible because I believed that we were sticking to the 6 feet option. But I guess he knew something that the teachers did not know at that point.
At my school, since it is a high school, I will not have that same group of students in my classroom all day as might be the case in elementary school. I will have up to 4 separate classes of students come through each day. This means that along with the reduced distance between desks, I will have 60 different students rather than 40 different students going in and out of my class all day. This is unnecessary since there is an option that would allow the 6 feet distance.

I agree with the following statements by Corey Rosenlee: "Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the 'health and safety of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness are the fundamental drivers to reopen schools,'" as Rosenlee said. "This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness

“Why is six feet distancing required for a college freshman, but three feet is okay for a high school senior? Why is six feet required at Costco and at restaurants, but for public school teachers and students, it is only three feet?. “The same rules that apply to the public should be followed in our schools.” Even UH is following the six feet rule!

Please allow us to teach in a safe environment for our students and teachers.
Sincerely,
Janet Wolf

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

C Keoahunui Uale Warrington <cualesmile@aol.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 11:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

" Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes)."

The above excerpt comes from the CDC.gov website in which this issue...distancing...is listed under the category of RISK. The recommendation is 6 FEET; not 3 FEET! How dare you risk the lives of our children by suggesting the school year open in August 4, 2020 with students sitting only 3 feet apart from each other. Kids will be kids...that means fidgeting, restlessness, passing items, turning around...turning sideways...they will NOT sit like store mannequins staring straight ahead for hours at a time!! It is ludicrous to think they will! They need to be separated from each other, AT MINIMUM, 6 feet from each other. Shrink the classroom sizes to make it happen! Split classes so 1/2 attend virtual while other 1/2 is live "in room". Outdoor classes under tarps in shaded areas?

I am 70 years old, female, born and raised on Oahu. **I do not support or accept your proposed 3 feet apart distancing plan!**Please....Make our children a priority! Think outside of the Box...find another solution!

Concerned for our Keiki,
C. Keoahunui UAle Warrington

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 ft distance for teachers.

Pauahi Hookano <pauahi.hookano@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 12:16 PM

ALoha,
I am a Department of Education teacher at Kalama Intermediate School on Maui. I have been on medical leave for a year and I am hoping to receive TDI next semester for the same condition. I also have lupus and I dialyze 3 times weekly. I am in extreme danger of dying from covid. Three feet distance is not enough to protect me. I served in the DOE for 20 years, but I am not eligible for retirement. How are my needs going to be met? I am sure I am not the only person on the front lines who is vulnerable.

I do not want to leave teaching, but I also do not wish to die *because* I am a teacher.

mahalo for your consideration of this matter.

Lisa Ann Pauahi Hookano, M. Ed.
245 Wailua Rd
Haiku, Hi 96708

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“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”
– **Cornel West**

Testimony

Ashley Henion <hstahype.ahenion@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 12:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Ashley Henion and I am speaking as a teacher and as an individual. I teach at Kainalu Elementary School in Kailua, HI.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I have been teaching fifth grade and I know that they are more capable but I am not confident in them doing so. They will share things and will be in contact with each other. I currently have 24 students assigned to me and doing this will not be safe. It will put me at risk as well. To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. To do this will not be the same across all the schools because we all have different views and/or opinions on who is well and such. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless, not only for the teachers and parents, but for the students and other staff in the school. This will personally give me more confidence in having extra steps to keep myself safe. I am one of the “high-risk” because of my health, I need to make sure I am safe. My family is only my mom, sister, and myself. My sister just recently had surgery, she is “high risk” and my mom is of an elderly age, so she is at “high risk” too. This is all the family I have, so please take this to heart. I know I am not the only one with this but this is all the family I have left. I just lost my grandma and father, I can’t lose my sister and mom due to me getting sick because of precautions that were not being taken at my workplace.

With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Ashley Henion

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Aaron Meyer <mr.aaron.meyer@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 12:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am testifying on Discussion Itwm VI (A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Aaron Meyer. I am a teacher and a parent of 2 students at Salt Lake Elementary School and 1 student at Moanalua Middle School.

I strongly oppose the BOE's recommendation of 3 feet between students in our classrooms. The recommended reduction of physical distance from 6 feet down to 3 feet puts our keiki, our educators, and our 'ohana at risk to contract COVID-19. This dishonors the agreement with HSTA to restart school with 6 feet of separation.

Thank you for taking my testimony into consideration. Let's keep our keiki, educators, and families safe and keep 6 feet of separation in our classrooms.

Aloha,

Aaron A. Meyer
Teacher, Grade 5
Salt Lake Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Marion Garner Wagner <marionw@hawaii.edu> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 12:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Marion Garner Wagner and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for re-opening school year 2020-2021.

Three feet between desks is not enough distance to abate the transmission of droplets disbursed while children are talking, singing, coughing or sneezing. It's troubling enough that masks are not being mandated, but the closer proximity in the classroom is just unacceptable.

Keeping the children as socially distant as possible when they are not seated will be challenging enough without the added worry about their seating arrangements.

Please mandate that classrooms be configured with desks at least 6 feet apart.

Thank you,
Marion Garner Wagner, K-6, SPED.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet social distance at public schools is unsafe.

Jeremy Gilbert <icemanjeg@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 1:46 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I own a business in Hawaii. Children from multiple public and private schools enter our building through out the week. All children must wear a mask at all times and maintain 6 feet of social distance. We also check temperatures of every person who enters the building. They also must disinfect their hands and shoes.

The suggestion that school students can sit apart at 3 feet intervals is incredibly alarming. My business has drastically reduced the number children allowed in a room to maintain the 6 foot distance recommended by the CDC and WHO. Why would our schools not be held to the same standard distance shown to be most effective by scientists around the world?

The virus has been shown to travel up to 3 feet with certain homemade face coverings and masks. Even 6 feet is not entirely safe but is safer than 3 feet at least. As cases are rising across the country and the State of Hawaii is considering allowing tourists back the number of virus cases will increase and likely coincide with when schools start up again.

With the virus I think it's incredibly dangerous to be the "first" to open schools. There is no encouraging evidence showing it's safe. I understand we must continue to live and carry on but not at the expense of taking shortcuts to get there. 3 feet social distancing is literally a "short" cut. We must maintain at least 6 feet social distancing as required by every other place of gathering in the state.

Deeply concerned,

Jeremy Gilbert

--
Jeremy Gilbert
Icemanjeg@gmail.com
917-676-4285

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Dale Fujimura <dalefujimura@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 1:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion VI (A).
I have 3 grandchildren that will be attending public school. My husband and I both have underlying health conditions. We assist in childcare when necessary. We recommend that the BOE reconsider the 3 feet spacing to be 6 feet.

Aloha,
Dale Fujimura

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Safety in the classroom

Corinne Shinn <cyscokids@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 2:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,
I am a 65-year-old veteran teacher and about to retire due to the unsafe condition that is being presented to schools from the Department of Education. I do not understand why teachers and students are allowed to be less than 6 feet in an enclosed space with more than 10 students while a six feet distance is recommended for all others. The school models presented indicate at-risk students to attend every day. I agree that face-to-face instruction is the best model. However, safety should come first. It also stated that these students are pre-k through second grade. Students at this age can not sit for prolonged periods of time. Their natural behavior is to touch, feel, smell, and even taste. With this in mind, aren't we setting up an unsafe environment for both students and staff? Aren't the teachers' and students' well-being important? Students are not mandated to wear PPE. This goes against the CDC guidelines. However, can we honestly expect students to wear masks the entire school day while they have trouble wearing them for a 30-minute drive to the supermarket? Until it is safe for all, I implore you to make students' and teachers' well-being the priority and not an after-thought. Teachers' and students' lives matter!
Sincerely,
A concerned teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michele Wong <mywong4@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 2:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Michele Wong and I am speaking as a teacher and as someone who cares for an elderly kupuna. I teach at Kāne'ohe Elementary School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. My school says that we can fit up to 20 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With a mere 3 feet of distance, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom, we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children? If adults wearing face masks are expected to remain 6 feet apart even when facing the same direction while standing in line, why are we changing the safety protocols when it deals with children who are not reliable about facing a certain direction at all times? The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools "space seating/desks **at least** 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk. Also, the CDC characterizes students who are "not spread apart" as being at the **highest** risk of contracting COVID-19. According to the agreement with the State of Hawaii, schools "shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread...by **maintaining** six (6) feet or two arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members...whenever possible." I believe the intended exception to the six feet apart is for cases in which students must be closely attended to, such as classrooms that support medically fragile students.

I also provide care to a 74-year-old kupuna in my house. As much as I will be constantly vigilant about limiting the risk of contracting COVID-19, my presence in a classroom with 20 students who are not adequately distanced all day, will pose a much greater risk of exposing my kupuna to the virus with potentially deadly effects. That is why I implore our leaders to make safety for ALL the priority by upholding the agreement with the condition of 6 feet distancing between and among students and staff members with the exception of medically fragile students. We all want our students back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Michele Wong

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nancy Peterson-Holt <npetersonholt@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 2:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
As a teacher I oppose the opening of school with the 3 feet distance and no masks in the clasroom. The CDC guidelines do not support this plan and I feel it will put teachers, staff and students at risk for potentially spreading Covid-19. I myself am a teacher in the kupuna age range, and do not feel safe with this plan.
Please reconsider and keep us all safe.
Mahalo,
Nancy Peterson-Holt

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Anthony Martinez <kalehuawehe808@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 2:24 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Please act to change the social distancing standard from 3ft to 6ft for our keiki. Let’s be safe rather than sorry.

Sincerely,
Tony Martinez
Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Alapa'i Kaulia <alapaikaulia@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 3:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kākou,

I am currently an emergency hire, Middle and High school Science teacher at Ke Kula O ʻEhunuikaimalino, Konawaena Complex. My child also attends the school I work at. I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I do not think that schools should be subject to only 3ft distancing because when we go to the store, bank, post office, or any other place of business we are required for the social distancing of 6ft. Why would we subject our children to this type of madness knowing that in the general public you are not allowed? I think that we need to be smart and follow general public guidelines and keep out teachers and students from being the spread of the COVID19. Please consider this even though it could mean a 100% digital platform for certain schools. We can not sacrifice the health and safety of our children and fellow teachers just to meet academics for the year. Also, as stated by HSTA president there will be many that leave the profession. This includes retirees, new hires, and even emergency hires because you are showing that their lives are not important and they will have no choice but to turn their backs on their careers to choose health and safety. That is an unfair predicament to leave them in. I know many that have not yet signed this school year's contract because they are afraid for their health and safety.

Mahalo,
Alapaʻi Kaulia

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rhonda <rhmasuda@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 3:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE Members,

I am writing to you in regards Discussion Item IV(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." As an elementary school teacher with 27 years of service and an alternate caregiver to aging parents, I am very disappointed and shocked at the ambiguous wording and negligent terms that are put forth in Reopening School Plans. It puts students, teachers, families, and OUR community at risk for another long term shelter at home and will open the DOE to law suits.

First of all, to think that young children can be trained to remain in seat, facing m front without unconsciously turning to talk, engaging with friends and peers, or touching their own faces, masks with only 3ft of distancing is

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

DOE Student and Teacher Spacing

Christopher Otsuka <ctotsuka13@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 3:33 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Chris Otsuka, I am a teacher in the DOE. I ask that you would please consider maintaining the 6 foot spacing rule for teachers and students to help protect everyone from the spread of coronavirus. Students will be in classes for extended periods of time through the day, so I believe anything less than the 6 feet could be dangerous for our students and our staff.

Thank you,
Chris Otsuka

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jill Sprott <sprottteach@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 4:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

This testimony pertains to Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 academic year.

My name is Jill Sprott, and I have been an educator in Hawai'i's schools since 1998. I am also a product of Hawai'i's schools, having attended Iliahi Elementary, Leilehua High School, and the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. As a teacher, I am vehemently opposed to allowing anything less than 6 feet of social distancing in schools.

Although I am currently teaching at Sacred Hearts Academy and not in a public school, and my school's plan calls for 6 feet of distancing, as are many private schools' plans, it is not right that students and teachers in public schools should have to learn and teach in anything but the safest conditions. This should not be a case of haves and have-nots: EVERY STUDENT and EVERY TEACHER, regardless of where they attend school or work, is entitled to a safe environment (with the definition of "safe" heavily dependent on scientific research and the most current information being shared by epidemiologists and immunologists).

The CDC recommends that schools ensure six feet of social distancing. There are also other recommendations for hygiene and sanitization that should be followed. If we pick and choose which rules suit us, and take shortcuts with safety, we compromise not only the health of students and teachers, but the health of those with whom they interact outside of school, including family members who may be at a higher-than-normal risk for complications.

Please INSIST upon the most stringent safety standards, for the good of our schools and the communities that rely on them.

Thank you,

Jill Sprott

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

2020-2021 school year

Naomi Pasion <naomi_pasion@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 4:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I would like to suggest an option for the 2020-2021 school year. Would it be possible to give the option for distance learning for all children and also give the option for students to attend in-class session?

The class could be live streamed and interactive at the same time as the in-class students are in session. The students who have internet and computer access from home would have the option to stay home and that is what I would prefer for my daughter who will be going to 2nd grade. The families who do not have that access wouldn't be pressured to have to obtain it for the sake of their children's education should distance learning be required.

I would also like to add that a 6 foot distancing between desks for in-class children should be required. UH students are required to maintain 6 feet distance. Why should it be any different for other students especially those at a more vulnerable age.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Naomi Pasion

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Re-opening of Schools

Rebecca Marsh <rebeccamarsh108@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 5:23 PM

I am a teacher at Kealakehe High School on the Big Island of Hawaii and am writing to advocate for distance learning.

Across the country, as states open up, tens of thousands of new Covid-19 cases are being identified every day. We cannot pretend the threat has passed and try to resume on-campus instruction - this will put the lives of students, staff and the wider community in danger.

Even if the guidelines firmly committed to six feet social distancing and face coverings under all circumstances (which they do not), I still don't believe on-campus instruction is safe. If even half the population of our school is on campus at any given time, that is over 600 students, and there are many "unstructured minutes" which make it impossible to enforce safety measures, such as recess, bathroom/water breaks, passing, lunch, waiting for/boarding buses, and bus rides to and from school. Kids are by nature social, and I think it is unrealistic to think we can maintain distance and safety while working with all the variables of the school environment.

While I would never choose distance learning under normal circumstances, it is a tool that can be utilized right now to save lives.

Rebecca Marsh

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Regarding reopening plans for school year 2020-21

Kathryn Gasilos <kgasilos@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 5:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am a concerned parent of two elementary school aged children and I do not feel comfortable with the guidelines for the upcoming school year. With tourism opening up the same week and it being close to flu season we must take extra precaution to ensure the safety of our children, teachers and staff.

The 3 ft rule, regardless of how they are facing, and no face masks indoors should be strongly reconsidered. 3 feet is not a safe distance for anyone one! And if you are not going to change that then the students must be wearing a face mask or shield at all times! With a face shield students are still able to breathe and cue in on social cues. If 6 feet is not feasible in the classroom then the face mask rule should change. 6 feet should be maintained at all times.

Another suggestion I have is that I feel the parent/guardian should have the option to keep their child home and do distance learning. That will help with keeping the amount of people in an enclosed space for long periods of time regardless of what the principal says. During this time, no one but the parent/guardian should have any say in how to keep their child safe.

I hope you take this into consideration and rethink the 3ft rule.

Thank you for your time.

Kathryn

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Classrooms and social distancing

Alyson kent <alyson0627@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 5:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
Please adhere to the CDC guidelines and have all schools and classroom desks and tables be 6 feet apart. Only allowing 3 feet apart is putting our children at risk, their families and our teachers.
As a teacher, I am nervous to teach in a classroom set up with only 3 feet apart between students. Classrooms are already crowded enough. We need to protect our children and their health.

As a parent, I have been keeping my child home since March to protect his health and well being as well as my families. I do not feel safe sending him to school with only 3 feet between him and another student in an over crowded classroom.

I have done my part since March and I expect you to do the same. I followed the state guidelines and have not traveled to keep my child safe. I expect the schools to keep our children safe while in your care.

I also feel school should not start on August 4th. To many tourists would just have started coming to the island. Plus, starting on or around in classroom on August 14 will give people who have traveled the opportunity to not send their children to school for the 2 weeks. To many people will traveled up until July 31st and send their children to school Without following guidelines. We should start with online school from Aug 4-14.

Also, 2 children per bus seat is not 6 feet apart. All seats should be seated with 1 child per seat! It is not following CDC guidelines to have 2 children per seat. It is unsafe for all the students. You are putting them at risk.

Thank you,
Alyson
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ann Takayama <ann.takayama@aol.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 6:06 PM
Reply-To: Ann Takayama <ann.takayama@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school Year. " My name is Ann Takayama and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Iliahi Elementary School and my child attends Leilehua High School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident the 3ft distancing is enough space between students to keep a safe distance from each other. I am a kindergarten teacher and am currently teaching summer school using the 6ft social distancing that is currently being used by every business. It is a challenge to insure that my 5 students keep their distance and face forward for the few hours they are with me. I cannot imagine a class of 20+ brand new, untrained kindergartners situated 3ft apart and expect them to keep their distance from each other let alone not touch, help, or feel the need to share with each other.

My school school says that we can fit up to 26 students 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that will stay put all day long! With 3ft distance between from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arms out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious and aware of practicing proper social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance and compromise everyone's health and safety?

To squeeze an entire class into a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with having students stay at their seats and get work done under normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I feel teachers should supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessment is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see or hear a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers are fairly inexpensive. Peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my child to school only if the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my child's education, but their safety is priority. My son is old enough to understand social distancing that is required of him, but how am I to know that others understand as well. That is why I implore our leaders make safety for ALL a priority, education second, and let teachers be a part of the discussion because teachers know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Ann Takayama

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 FEET DISTANCE IN CLASS

Laura Fukumoto <laurafkmto@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I AM A CLASSROOM TEACHER WHO IS IN THE HIGH RISK GROUP BECAUSE OF MY AGE. I WILL BE TEACHING A 5TH GRADE CLASS AT ALIAMANU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THIS SCHOOL YEAR. IN ORDER FOR ME TO BE PROTECTED WHILE IN THE CLASS, I FEEL WE NEED TO COMPLY WITH THE 6 FEET DISTANCE WHILE IN THE CLASSROOM.. IF NOT MY 5TH GRADERS WILL BE SIDE BY SIDE JUST 3 FEET APART. EVEN IF I ASK STUDENTS TO WEAR THEIR MASKS IF THEY TURN TOWARD THEIR SIDE BY SIDE PARTNER, I DOUBT IF THEY WILL REMEMBER THIS ALL DAY LONG.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, ONE OF OUR TEACHERS WHO LIVE IN HALSEY TERRACE JUST SHARED THAT ABOUT 20% OR PERHAPS 1/4 OF THE PARENTS IN THAT COMMUNITY ARE PLANNING TO NOT HAVE THEIR CHILD WEAR ANY MASK BECAUSE THEY ARE "REPUBLICANS." IN ORDER FOR TEACHERS AND ALL OTHERS IN SCHOOL TO BE SAFE, WE NEED TO COMPLY WITH ALL THREE RECOMMENDATIONS: WEAR MASKS ALL DAY, STAY 6 FEET AOART, AND WASK HANDS OFTEN.

IN ADDITION, MY SON WHO IS IN HAWAII'S AIR NATIONAL GUARD IAND WHO S A CREW CHIEF FOR A PLANE JUST INFORMED ME THAT WHEN HE RETUNES FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY HE NO LONGER NEEDS TO QUARANTINE. THIS WILL IMPACT OUR MILITARY PARENTS (ALMOST 2/3 OF OUR PARENTS) WHO JUST GOT REASSIGNED TO HAWAII.

BECAUSE THE PURPOSE OF THE MASK IS TO **PROTECT OTHERS WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. IF THE MASK PROTECTED ONLY OURSELVES, WE HAVE A RIGHT TO CHOOSE NOT TO WEAR IT BECAUSE ONLY WE WILL BE AFFECTED. BUT BECAUSE WE WEAR IT TO PROTECT OTHERS, WE DO NOT HAVE A CHOICE. IF, WE ARE 1OO%+ THAT WE ARE NEGATIVE (in other words we just took a test and got a negative and we are 100% sure we are not asymptomatic, then not wearing a mask may be a choice) BUT if we are NOT 100% certain that we are NEGATIVE AND HAVE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE (AND THAT SOMEONE GETS THE VIRUS AND DIES) AND IF THROUGH "TRACKING" THE PERSON WITHOUT THE MASK TURNS OUT TO BE ME OR YOU, AND IS PROVEN TO BE ONE WHO INFECTED THAT PERSON, I THINK THAT YOU OR I COULD BE CHARGED WITH "2ND OR 3RD DEGREE MURDER."**
WHY? A MASK PROTECTS OTHERS, NOT OURSELF - SO WE REALLY DO NOT HAVE A CHOICE BUT TO PUT A MASK ON. ALL THREE SAFE GUARDS MUST BE ADHERED TO: WEARING MASKS, REMAINING 6 FEET APART, AND WASHING OUR HANDS. IF THESE ARE NOT ADHERED TO, ALL THOSE VULNERABLE TEACHERS WILL QUIT OR RETIRE. ALTHOUGH I LOVE MY JOB AND AM A VERY EFFECTIVE TEACHER (I AM NATIONALLY CERTIFIED AND HAVE WON A PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATH/SCIENCE TEACHING), I WILL RETIRE.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Foot danger

Jennifer Dyer <leigh_luna@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 7:10 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
I know you will make the right decision for my wellbeing a all students and teachers. Keep 6 feet!! I walk around 11 classrooms checking on my students as a School Counselor at Daniel K Inouye Elementary. 3 feet means more students, without masks equivalent to a party. My father, Peter Dyer former Provost at Windward Community College would not want me nor grandchildren living in this form. It's upsurd that you feel 3 feet is enough when a cough reaches 12 feet. Please do the right thing, 6 feet of aloha.
Jenny Dyer

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lindsey Medina <lindsey.medina@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 8:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

As a teacher who is pregnant and 5 times more likely to develop severe symptoms of COVID 19, I feel that 3ft social distancing is not adequate for the classroom environment. Our first job as educators is to provide a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Under these guidelines I cannot firmly say that I would be providing these basic necessities to all learners. Follow CDC guidelines for schools and protect Hawaii's Keiki.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Medina
6th Grade Teacher
Kaneohe Elementary School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

TESTIMONY

KEKOA CUMMINGS <carvacummings@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:01 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern:

I am submitting testimony in regards to the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am an elementary teacher on Moloka'i.

Your plan to re-enter students & teachers to school has me feeling insecure and uncomfortable. Let me tell you why.

First, a 3-feet distancing between students is ludicrous.

You are jeopardizing the health and safety of our youngest citizens by blatantly going against the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Studies have confirmed that droplets travel beyond 3-feet. In addition, the CDC guidelines state that a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN.

This brings me to my next concern of sitting 3-feet apart WITH NO MASKS.

It is my understanding that students will be allowed to remove their masks after initial entrance onto campus every day. It is understandable. They have that right. However, taking off their masks doubling with sitting only 3-feet apart from each other puts them in unsafe territory. Let me reiterate, a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN.

Finally, my last, but not the least, concern. According to the plan, the 3-feet distance will work IF students are facing forward at all times

while in the classroom.

HAVE YOU EVER TAUGHT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL? Students will turn to speak to each other. Your ideal scenario of students "only looking forward" while sitting in the classroom inhibits our students from ENGAGING (from a safe distance) and learning. This is irrational.

I am apprehensive about returning to the classroom under these circumstances. Your 3-feet component of the plan will put many students & educators in harm's way. Please revise this plan to reflect your concern and care for our health and safety AND NOT YOUR DESIRE TO PACK IN AS MANY STUDENTS AS YOU CAN INTO A CLASSROOM WITH THE BARE MINIMUM DISTANCING.

THANK YOU!

Christina M. Cummings

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lester Kunimitsu <lkunimitsu@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Three feet distance is a compromise that are risking students and teachers health. Not testing is also a cost item that tells us you do not care about the health and safety of our students and staff. This just shows us how much you do not care.

Lester Kunimitsu
H. P. Baldwin High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My first grader on blended rotation

Rivero Family <theriverofamily2009@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi!

Im afraid if my 1st grade child will be at a school whose school or principal may select “blended rotation”. AB groups

First, what am I suppose to do about care? My fourth grader is independent enough to stay home alone. Not my first grader.

My fourth grader will now have to watch her brother on top of complete her own coursework at home. This is unfair to her. I will have to have an array of microwaveable food so that my children will have lunch while my husband and I are working. This is not optimal for anyone.

I am not just concerned for myself but other k-2 families who need to figure out care and food for their child while they are at work.

Thank you for listening.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet distance

Troy Freitas <troyfreitas@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

It seems ridiculous that students are only going to be three feet apart. As mandated everywhere you go, it is 6 feet and this is for a short period of time. Students will not only be 3 feet a part, but be together for longer periods of time. Ridiculous!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

ARLEEN BOURCIER <arleenlab@aol.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 10:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

Hello Board of Education Members,

My name is Arleen Bourcier and I have been a teacher at Pearl City Elementary for the majority of my 22 year teaching career. I am 46 years old and have been a diabetic for more than 10 years. Like many families in Hawaii, my household is multigenerational; including myself, my husband and asthmatic son, as well as my elderly mother, with several heath issues, and disabled older brother. As you can see, my household of three generations has many health issues.

Since school closures began in March, I have taken the quarantine very seriously. I can count on both hands the necessary trips made to pick up groceries or medication. Other than those few trips, I have remained at home to put my family at as little risk as possible. Now that the beginning of the school year is fast approaching, I am faced with anxiety and stress like I've never felt before. To say the least, I am terrified to return to the classroom, to the career I chose and love, the only "job" I've ever had. I'm terrified that going to work each day may put myself, and every member of my family, at risk. After 22 years of teaching, I am torn between returning to a potentially unsafe work environment and the safety of my family. I cannot believe that this is a choice I may need to make, however to ensure the health and safety of my family, I am considering leaving the teaching profession.

There has been a great deal of uncertainty in the guidelines given to reopen Hawaii's public schools. This is understandable because we are dealing with a situation unlike any other. What isn't understandable is the idea that the State of Hawaii and the Board of a Education does not seem to realize the severity of their guideline decisions. In a typical school year my Kindergarten classroom has overflowed with 23 students or more and although it was always challenging, my fellow kindergarten teachers and I persevered and carried through the year giving it our all. This year, we have been told that our class count will continue to be at 20 or more students with a 3-foot distance and no masks. After 22 years in the classroom and having been coughed on, sneezed on and smeared with dirty

hands on a daily basis, I can tell you with all certainty that 3-foot distancing is NOT in the best interest of anyone in a school setting.

Nothing is more important than a person's health. Is a student's education important? Absolutely, without a doubt. Is a student's social well being important? Yes, definitely. Is a student's health, the student's family's health, a teacher's health, or a teacher's family's health important, if not the most important of all? Hopefully the answer to this last question is obvious to everyone. With all of this being said, please consider that all teachers, all students and all families should not have to choose between having an education and staying healthy in this unexpected and uncertain situation. Please help Hawaii's students and families by reopening our schools requiring masks in the classrooms, at least 6-foot distancing, and a reasonable number of students in the classroom. With all sincerity, thank you for your dedication and empathy in this challenging time.

Kind Regards,
Arleen Bourcier

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Meg Baumgardt <megbaumgardt@msn.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 11:52 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to let you know that I am very concerned and dismayed at a few things that Superintendent Kishimoto conveyed regarding schools reopening. A three foot distance is an unacceptable distance between students. It does not follow CDC guidelines and it puts my daughter along with every other student, their teachers, plus families at home in jeopardy of contracting covid 19. I am one of many family members who fall into the at risk category and I think your plan of three feet distance puts our family at undue risk. Another concern isn't the idea that schools will not be taking temperatures in order to ensure students are safe to be at school for the day. Just as we are asked to submit to a temperature reading in order to go to the dentist or even a doctor's office right now, the most appropriate action is to take a simple temperature reading on the way into school at the start of the day in order to protect our keiki, teachers and families! Please make sure that our students teachers and families are safe during this difficult time.

Thank you!
Meg Baumgardt

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ellie Kantar <eliannakantar@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 6:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am emailing testimony for Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

My name is Elianna Kantar and I am an ELL teacher serving 9-12 grade students at Farrington High School.

I was deeply upset to learn that Superintendent Kishimoto publicly announced that students would be able to sit 3-feet away from each other when schools reopen. The assumption that all students will remain facing the same direction during a class is ignorant of the behavior of children. The decision to immediately break the MOU signed with HSTA is not only disrespectful but it shows that the DOE is willing to be reckless with the lives of teachers, students, and their families.

The CDC recommends that schools space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart. To blatantly disregard CDC recommendations shows that the health and safety of school faculty, staff, students, and the families of all of these people is not a priority to the DOE and that they are willing to risk our lives in order to reopen schools.

I am asking you to mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks. In addition, the DOE must honor the signed MOU and they must follow all CDC recommendations. To hear the superintendent so quickly disregard the MOU calls into question what about DOE actions teachers will actually be able to trust moving forward during this difficult time. Learning cannot happen and students cannot feel safe and supported if both teachers and students are fearing for their health every time they walk into their classroom.

Thank you,
Elianna

testimony

maria guardino <mguardino@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 6:27 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE board members,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

I have served as an educator of English Language Learners in Hawaii for 16 years. Five at Farrington High School, eleven years Kawananakoa Middle School, and this year, I will begin my 17th year at Kaimuki High School.

As outlined in Hawaii DOE's Strategic Plan, two of the 14 Student Success Indicators are Teacher Retention and Keeping Teacher Positions filled. These two indicators support Student Success. Teachers remain teachers when they feel they have a voice. Our voice is our Union. How can bending CDC guidelines and going against the agreement in the memorandum of understanding build trust, respect and hope? Going against agreements works against the Strategic Plan and against Student Success.

Last year I was a mentor teacher to a new teacher. It was wonderful to support her enthusiasm and growth as a new teacher, but when we went to distance learning, I saw her struggle without the face-to-face model of teaching. In-person communication is energizing. Although I refer to a new teacher, I also knew seasoned teachers who struggled to embrace distance learning and our students. Additionally, distance learning is NOT the best means of education for all of our learners. If Hawaii's number of Corona cases rises again, and we have to go back to full-time distance learning, because we cannot adhere to CDC guidelines, are we prepared to lose more teachers AND students?

I understand that we are trying to educate as many students as possible, but we should also consider facts as outlined by government agencies based on scientific data.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. In the end, does Hawaii have the medical resources and the finances if there is a large surge in cases, hospitalization and closures of businesses again?

If its herd immunity we want, just state that and give facts as to why it is okay to place students only 3 feet apart. Otherwise, please let teachers serve our students safely by following CDC guidelines and the memorandum of understand that was agreed upon.

Thank you for your time and service on our Board of Education,

Maria Guardino, NBCT, MSW

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Allen Akoi <allen.akoi@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Allen Akoi and I work at Kahuku high and intermediate High School

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I feel that it is ridiculous that we think 3 feet apart is good enough because they will be facing the same way. We act as if kids won’t turn to talk and converse with each other. EVERY teacher knows that everyone facing forward the entire time NEVER happens.

What’s even worse is unless we have the right masks, not even wearing masks stops this virus from spreading.

Just because Hawai’i didn’t get hit as bad as New York doesn’t mean to get laxed on protocols for safety. It’s because we followed those protocols that we weren’t in a bad situation like New York.

We need to be smart and safe and not cave to pressure because the new school year is starting soon or fear of schools and students not having adequate internet or computer access.

The last thing you want on your head is some teachers and students end up dying. The death toll has sky rocketed and we are getting worse numbers of daily deaths. A second wave is coming because of plans to re open

There should be a plan of distance learning, until after that wave or at least for the 1st semester. Please reconsider or at the very least, keep stricter saftey protocols and not make up your own.

Testimony

Joanna Lee <joannalee8@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020

Board of Education Members:

My name is Joanna Lee. I am a 7th grade science teacher at Washington Middle School in the Honolulu District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony to demand that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

As a 34 year veteran and senior teacher on campus, COVID-19 has changed everything I have experienced in the teaching profession. Like other veteran teachers, I would have immediately retired due to the increased workload and overwhelming DOE expectations. Unfortunately, I cannot retire due to financial obligations and my need to support three college aged children as a single parent.

In a snapshot, here are the reasons six feet (and not three feet) should be the RULE and not the expectation of DOE personnel or a State Health Director who has not been in a 7th grade Title 1 public school classroom.

1. *Common Sense: The average 7th grader is focused on fairness and justice. Why would their health and safety be jeopardized being only*

three feet away when banks, retail stores, grocery stores, etc. ALL EXPECT customers to be six feet apart facing in the same direction when students are not? That would be their FIRST question.

2. *Middle schoolers, especially hormonally active 7th graders are programmed to interact with each other. Students can easily reach each other if their arms are spread apart. Some 7th graders are six feet tall whose arms are longer than the average student as their limbs grow faster than other parts of their body during adolescence. (The television media showed a classroom whose desks were six feet apart!)*
3. *Teaching will be even more challenging because the "high need" vulnerable students will predominantly be in class and on campus. These students often require more attention to stay focused, are usually more physically active and need additional help/discipline.*
4. *There will not be enough spacing for teacher interaction to help these special students and will not be a "safe distance" putting teachers at higher risk.*
5. *The higher safety risk for teachers (older, with school age children, caring for eldery in the home, primary caregiver) puts them in a precarious situation to choose between their job and their personal lives. Should the regular teacher fall ill, substitutes will be worse in the long run since they will not be properly COVID trained. The existing teacher shortage is already a cause for concern.*
6. *The rising number of community spread COVID cases now as the economy opens up is an example of what could easily happen within the classroom community in public schools. Students may have a sore throat without a fever or be asymptomatic and spread COVID without even knowing it.*
7. *Students will already be uncomfortable due to the summer temperature. Air conditioners will be off and the fans may easily spread the tiny droplets within three feet versus six feet.*
8. *Daily interactions with students three feet apart should demand more PPE equipment for the classroom teacher than other classified staff as we will now be considered the "front line" workers.*
9. *The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart*

when feasible" to reduce risk.

As a Board of Education member, I encourage you to sit in and/or "teach for a day in a COVID prone classroom" so you will experience a teacher's average day. The last BOE member I saw was Lex Brodie who told me "there's isn't a wastebasket big enough for all of the DOE programs to fit in."

Thank you for addressing my concerns.

Mahalo,

Joanna Lee, Washington Middle School, Honolulu District, Oahu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kahului PTSA <kahuluiptsa@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!
My son along with his close friends attends Kahului Elementary School. He will be in 3rd grade. He had about 20+ classmates in his previous classes. Please reconsider the guidelines for schools' reopening.
My whole family along with his grandma and his baby brother will be in great danger. I, as his Mother is deeply concerned on letting him back for a face to face education at his school with these new guidelines.
Also considering that these are young children in this school, so following safety rules will be difficult.

#distanceschooling #splitclasses Or
#Homeschool

Mahalo, Sharon Rummans
KES PTSA President
Maui Regional Director

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michelle Carlson Colte <mcolte@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My testimony can be accessed here and I have pasted it below.
Thank you.
****

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Michelle Colte and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Daniel K. Inouye Elementary and my daughter attends Mililani High School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I taught summer school this summer and saw first hand that it was impossible to keep them from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. And this was with only 6-8 students in my summer class. I can't imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students.

The DOE is proposing students sit 3 feet apart and without masks. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. Covid-19 can be caught at a distance of 8 feet.

Additionally, my school and my daughter's school are military impacted schools. The State of Hawaii has relaxed the 14 day quarantine for military families--they do NOT need to quarantine when they arrive on island. Military officials do NOT report their Covid-19 cases to the public. For these reasons also, the schools must be proactive in establishing safe, social distancing.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my child to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my child's education, but her safety is priority. I am teaching my child how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn't as careful with social distancing, they are children and don't know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Michelle Colte

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony JULY 9, 2020 GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

Patrick DeBusca Jr. <pdebusca@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:26 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Name: Patrick DeBusca Jr., Parent of public high school student.
Meeting: BOE THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020 GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
Agenda item: Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
Position: OPPOSE.

My daughter is a public high school student. Resuming face-to-face instruction in schools now is a grave mistake.

1. You are planning to re-open schools when the risk from COVID is higher than when we closed schools. Community spread is spiking in the US and Hawaii because people are no longer practicing safe behaviors. Hawaii will soon be throwing the doors open to out-of-state travelers with insufficient plans and resources to detect, trace and mitigate infected people. Public health authorities warn of a surge when the Fall flu season arrives. Evidence is mounting that COVID is more infectious and transmitted by air.

CNBC, 7/2/2020:

The coronavirus has mutated in a way that might help the pathogen spread more easily, White House health advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci said Thursday.

New York Times, 7/4/2020:

But in an open letter to the W.H.O., 239 scientists in 32 countries have outlined the evidence showing that smaller particles can infect people, and are calling for the agency to revise its recommendations. The researchers plan to publish their letter in a scientific
journal next week. Whether carried aloft by large droplets that zoom through the air after a sneeze, or by much smaller exhaled droplets that may glide the length of a room, these experts said, the coronavirus is borne through air and can infect people when inhaled.
If airborne transmission is a significant factor in the pandemic, especially in crowded spaces with poor ventilation, the consequences for containment will be significant. Masks may be needed indoors, even in socially-distant settings. Health care workers may need
N95 masks that filter out even the smallest respiratory droplets as they care for coronavirus patients. Ventilation systems in schools, nursing homes, residences and businesses may need to minimize recirculating air and add powerful new filters. Ultraviolet lights
may be needed to kill viral particles floating in tiny droplets indoors.

2. DOE and DOH are making up false guidelines - 3 feet instead of 6 feet social distancing. This contradicts ALL guidance we have heard. This already violates the agreement that was made between the DOE and the HSTA. Masks are optional indoors but must be worn outside? "CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain."

3. Children will be sent to school sick. We know that parents, under pressure, will give kids cold medicine and take them to school. Screening with not catch this. By the time we find out a child is sick, an exposure has already occurred.

4. What proof will parents have that schools are receiving PPE and other needed supplies from DOE or that the DOE has established a reliable supply chain? In my job I have seen first-hand the problems with obtaining and maintaining supplies in the absence of institutional leadership.

5. Learning does not happen when there is fear about physical and psychological safety.

6. Distance learning was not given enough support by the State and DOE. It was prematurely called a failure and abandoned without the State or DOE committing to funding and supporting it. Schools had to convert to an entirely new

model of learning in a ridiculously short period of time in order to save lives, not perfect their service delivery and they did the best they could with what they had available at the time.

Testimony

Helena Costa <keanuenue@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Helena Costa, and I work at Ha’aheo Elementary in Hilo. My son attends EB DeSilva.

Your decision to limit spacing to 3 feet, and to allow language to go out to the public discouraging masks in classrooms is outrageous and disrespectful. There is no scientific evidence to show that children do not transmit COVID, and in fact many counties in Oregon and Texas are discovering it is quite the opposite, as they reopen summer daycares. Our classrooms are poorly-ventilated and crowded, and children are impulsive and have not yet developed a sense of long-term consequences. The nature of a classroom is a lot of talking in a small space- for years, our pedagogical shift has been focused on allowing more room for discussion in learning. These three things- crowded with people not from your family, poorly ventilated, with lots of talking, are exactly the three things the DOH keeps sending out endless notifications urging the public not to do. And you want to strip away the few protections there are from classrooms? Every other public space requires these. Our PUBLIC schools should too.

I read about the “bubble” justification, which is a nonsensical interpretation of the bubble theory of quarantine. A bubble in quarantine is when two or three families quarantine together to alleviate social-distancing loneliness. It comes with a warning that it carries risks, and the families are expected to only interact with each other.

Your “bubbles” are not a closed circuit at all. They refer to 10 or more families, who may or may not be acting cautiously, and the chain of transmission stretches out exponentially to all the people each family member associates with. Add that to the above conditions (crowded, poorly-ventilated, talking) and you too are asking for outbreaks. As a public school teacher, let me also assure you, children do not have a good sense of hygiene- if one kid has it, soon many others will too.

These straw-man arguments are incredibly disrespectful. Anyone with common sense understands they are not a closed circuit, and yet you continue to throw rhetoric like “classroom ohana” around, as if your wishful thinking will protect us. My actual ohana, the actual ohana of my students, is who you should actually be working to protect by opening your eyes to the reality of the situation.

I am scared to go back to work, for a myriad of reasons. I am scared I will get sick, and take it back to my ohana- my child, my boyfriend, my elderly parents, my boyfriend’s elderly parents, my 90 year old grandmother who I also care for. I am scared that the responsibility for protecting the actual ohana of my students is also upon me- their parents, tiny siblings, tutus and more. If I don’t catch that someone is ill, and it spreads, I will feel terrible. I am not a doctor, I am an educator, but I am being asked to keep everyone in my classroom safe, and you are stripping away the only tools I have to do so against this air-borne disease.

I am also scared of the potentially dangerous interactions you have set up pitting parents against teachers. Our MOU is in direct contrast to what you sent out publicly. Our negotiated conditions should stand, otherwise you are negotiating in bad faith with some of your most loyal employees. Some parents will use their common sense and insist on masks, some will read your "guidelines" and think children are magically exempt from risk. There will be anger and fury from both sides as they debate how these rules are implemented- and will that fury be directed at you? No, it never is. It will come into the classroom, in the form of angry parents, non-compliant children, and dangerous situations.

Your strength is to come out with a unified message- masks everywhere, distancing everywhere. You have the say- parents do not understand the classroom, and should not be influencing policy for this. I have heard over and over, "My kid wants to go back to school, they should open the schools". But we need to make policy decisions based on what it safest for all, not on what children (who do not yet have the abstract reasoning to understand those consequences) want. You are assuring the public of a safety we teachers CANNOT PROVIDE if you strip away these few protections. We may not be able to provide it even with them.

The idea of children needing to see our faces to develop facial-recognition is also a straw man argument. One, because we do not operate in a vacuum- children will see faces at home, on tv. Children can read our eyes- you can still tell when someone smiles in a mask. And two, this is not forever- this is for right now, when the danger of losing their (and our) lives, health and loved ones should take precedent. A dead child does not need to read faces, and one could argue the loss of a loving parent or grandparent will take a far greater toll than not having constant access to faces. The only real argument you might make is that they need to see a teacher's lips when learning letter sounds or phonics in the lower grades- but the teacher can wear a face shield, and the children can mask up to keep that teacher safe.

We are trying to go back to work. No one cares about the keiki more than us, otherwise we would not endure the low-pay, the increased work-load, the lack of classroom supplies we pay for ourselves. But we are not yours to sacrifice. If everyone else gets these protections, we should too.

And if you really cared about education, you would be throwing your weight into asking us what worked in distance learning. In a very short time, a lot of us pulled together some pretty awesome approaches, and had many successes- in my daily zooms, we covered a lot of material, and my high-needs kids had a quiet, responsive, interactive environment in which to work. Allowing us the time and option of meeting our children's' educational needs in this way may have been the smarter approach, as at the moment it looks like we are being set up to cycle in and out of the classroom in the most disruptive way possible, when the outbreaks and inevitable quarantines start happening.

I will end here, although I could go on (perhaps noting that despite pulling all safety measures, the DOE has opted not to offer any safety net in terms of increased sick leave for educators, leaving us to burn through whatever we have accrued- a particularly nasty move on our new teachers, our pregnant teachers who receive no paid leave, and thereby save up their regular leave just to have their own child, and our teachers with families who will need to stay home when their own children are sick, or quarantined).

Keiki are strong and adaptable- if everyone wears a mask and shows that it's not a big deal, they will do it. If we are consistent with asking them to stand apart to keep each other safe, they will learn it. You have a vastly loyal set of workers, who truly care about our keiki. Maybe don't throw our lives under the bus.

Mahalo,
Helena Costa

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sarah Shewmaker <sarahshew79@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello.
My name is Sarah Shewmaker.
I am a fifth grade teacher at Makawao Elementary on the island of Maui.

I am very concerned that the DOE has put forth language that students can be placed three feet apart from one another. The CDC states that students should be placed “at least” six feet apart. I am concerned for the health of my students, the health of my colleagues, the health of my family, and my own health. What will happen to public schools when teachers start falling ill due to lack of distancing? No substitutes will willingly come in to teach knowing that their health is in jeopardy. Schools will be scrambling to figure out how to cover the positions of those teachers who are sick.

More importantly, why is it that teachers are being expected to sacrifice their health to do their jobs, when there are other ways of teaching our children and ensuring our safety simultaneously? I’m frustrated and angry that the DOE, some parents, and some administrators are comfortable asking us to risk our lives in order to some their lives easier.

Please mandate that six feet distancing is the only option for schools reopening.

Thank you,

Sarah Shewmaker

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Laurie Luna <lluna@aliamanuel.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on behalf Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a teacher at Aliamanu Elementary school. I feel that this situation that we are in is very dangerous to our students and staff. I really understand that education is very important. However is it really conducive to teach our students to be reckless with our health and lives just to I don't know have a new norm.... when we should be teaching them to be responsible for themselves and others. That's why we have laws and rules.... I can go on and on... we just have to do what is best for everyone....

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nina Pathammavong <nina.pathammavong@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Department if Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am demanding that the board mandate the classrooms be configured with 6 feet between student desks in order to keep our students and staff safe.

Nina Rista
Kailua High School

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mandate 6 ft between student's desks

jlono3@aol.com <jlono3@aol.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:50 AM
Reply-To: jlono3@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

I would like it to be mandated six feet between student desks and not the three feet you want. Whatever is required in public should also happen in our public schools for our students and teachers. I am a teacher and 3 feet between student desks is not okay. We may have to take our students outdoors for class and so be it.

These are hard times we face and endangering lives will not help. I am 64 years old almost 65. I want to keep working until I'm 70. I love my job and students. Everyone in the classroom should feel safe. We know how small the classrooms can be with over 20 students.

Thank you for your time.

Josephine Lono, M.Ed., Special Education Teacher
Nanakuli High & Intermediate School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet dangerous

Elisabeth Yuen <lizzyu2010@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
As both a parent and educator for over 14 years, I urge you to direct schools to follow the recommendation of 6 feet social distancing with mandatory face masks and or shields.

In addition I ask you to support the use of other facilities for classrooms and the movement of staff qualified as teachers in resource rolls back into the class to support smaller class sizes. Sharing of campuses for over populated schools. Please think outside the box

Mahalo,
Elisabeth Yuen

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

A (short version) of my parent & DOE teacher's view on reopening

Gina Smith <ginavo779@aol.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,
I am Gina Smith and I am a teacher at Pōmaika'i Elementary School on Maui.
I will sending my 7 year old daughter to
school with me and my 3 year old son to Preschool.
The idea of 3 ft social distancing is okay with me as I know both schools will be taking temperature checks upon arrival and cleaning heavily throughout the day.
Hand washing will be a reoccurring thing many times throughout the day.
Open Hawai'i's schools - the kids need us back in action!

Sincerely,
Gina Smith

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Colleen Mosher <ckpmosher21@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To: Hawaii's Board of Education
From: Colleen Mosher, teacher at Kainalu Elementary School in Kailua, Hawaii
Regarding: The Hawaii DOE's plan for reopening schools

It is of utmost importance that the board supports the thousands of Hawaii students and educators starting school in August by mandating health **guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID 19 in our schools**. As of now, the DOE plan states that students may sit 3 feet apart facing the same direction without masks. That cannot be a wise decision when community and health leaders are asking everyone to abide by a 6 feet distance and wear masks! That should be the case in our schools as well, especially when realizing that every student and educator comes from and returns to loved ones outside of schools. The day will come when we can have everyone at schools working in close proximity to one another without masks; but not now.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mandate 6 feet distance!

ketc3live news <ketc3live@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,
Please protect our educators!
If the state is asking grown adults to use the 6 ft rule, please ensure children (who aren't able to control themselves as much) as adults, to follow the 6 feet rule as well.
Educators are not disposable & less of anything to change it to 3 feet. I implore you to protect the group of people who help to shape our future! Give educators a fighting chance to continue to pursue their passion despite this pandemic.
Protect the Keiki with stricter parameters that are already going to be hard for educators to enforce. 3 feet allows kids to reach over & touch one another. 3 feet of space between desks allows for less wiggle & passing room where they can brush up & touch each other.
3 ft allows for whispering when passing each other which needs to be avoided. Educators already have enough they need to juggle & manage. Why make their job harder with 3 ft instead of the normal 6 feet apart rule?
Please be kind to educators. Ensure 6 feet apart for students.
Mahalo,
AnJanette Catekista.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Asha Kanhai <jennifer.kanhai@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:13 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing in response to the most recent “plan” to reopen schools and NOT mandate 6 feet social distancing or a face mask for students AND staff.

This is ABSOLUTELY ridiculous, the COUNTRY and WORLD and suffering from a pandemic that has no vaccine or cure and in order to ensure safety in PUBLIC spaces, masks AND 6 foot social distancing is suggested. How is it that the BOE and Ms. Kishimoto think it is in any way plausible or safe to open schools with 3 feet distancing between students and would like students to “face forward”, honestly, has anyone even been IN a school? Not only will this impact teaching, group work and communication this is UNSAFE.

My family and I have adhered to the ordinances in place, staying home, going out for requires trips, wearing a mask and keeping a safe distance away from others and now you are subjecting educators and students to an environment which will encourage virus spread and contact. There is already an up tick in community spread and there has already been a report of a student attending credit recovery classes being diagnosed with the virus.

This is the most irresistible and ludicrous “plan” to open safely. I DO NOT support the BOE’s “plan” to open schools with this plan.

Thank you for your time. Please make decisions that benefit our community and it’s residents rather than a rushed opening.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

camlyn demotta <camlynjeneal@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing you this email because 3 feet is not social distancing. I'm concerned for the safety of my daughter (who's in 3rd grade) and others. I DO NOT agree with this decision. Please reconsider.

Camlyn Pola

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

HSTA 6ft apart

jayeli2005@yahoo.com <jayeli2005@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
We are concerned with the lack of social distancing in the classrooms. We support moving all learning to a remote learning model, indefinitely. Teachers can become assistants to primary teaching conducted remotely. If BOE needs assistance in enacting this, please feel free to contact us.

Mahalo,
Jaymie and Elijah Frost

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Joana Nakandakari <jn.sayuri@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a teacher at Ka'iulani Elementary school. As a teacher who is also around elderly family members it very much concerns me that we are now supposed to be placing desks 3 feet apart rather than 6. It was my understanding before that CDC guidelines recommend 6 feet apart for separation to minimize risk of getting this vicious virus.

As a teacher I know and can say with confidence the students in my class regardless of how the desks are organized will turn to their neighbor at some time. Students are kids, they face different directions, they try and play with their neighbor's things, or talk to other students not always facing front. I find it a bit ridiculous that the BOE does not recognize this and in turn will put students and teachers at risk. It seems that shoving students in our classroom is our priority, when SAFETY of students and teachers should be the priority. Continuing with three feet apart will lead to school shut downs, outbreaks, and possibly very ill teachers and students in the process.

As a teacher I care about my job and our responsibility to our kids and our community. The fact that I will be UNCOMFORTABLE at my job based on placement and space of our kids makes me very disappointed in the BOE and our own superintendent. Most teachers can't afford taking leave because they feel scared to return, we all need to make a living.

I beg of the board to please reconsider and start thinking of the health of our teachers, children, and safety above all.

Although teachers have big hearts, we are not willing to put our lives at risk for something that is clearly not safe. Nor should we have to be put in this position.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Chen <jenniferchen808@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:20 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Attention BOE:

As many have heard by now there was an employee working for the Honolulu City & County summer fun program that tested positive for coronavirus.

As Mayor Caldwell stated, "this employee exhibited excellent judgment both in their regular use of personal protective equipment..."
He continued to say "This is a prime example of how important it is for everyone to wear their facial coverings, and how this simple act is one of the easiest and most important things we can all do to help slow the spread of COVID-19."

This is an example that ALL EMPLOYEES working in the DOE especially educators working with our keikis in the lower levels should be MANDATED to wear face masks AND given an option for face shields. Not told to wear only a face shield. I understand that "wearing face masks hinders younger students to see their teachers' faces and avoid potential barriers to phonological instruction" but at a time like this, it should NOT outweigh the health and safety of the teachers, students, families AND the community.

Speaking as a healthcare professional, we are wearing face masks AND face shields throughout the entire hospital. Not only when dealing with covid patients but in every unit.

The MINIMUM that teachers should be MANDATED is to wear is a face mask. If they feel more comfortable wearing a face shield WITH a face mask, they should be given that individual choice.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and my concern.

Jennifer Chen

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jaycie Ige <jige@wheeler.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,

I, Jaycie Ige, am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. I am a teacher at Wheeler Elementary School and feel that the 3ft social distancing protocol provided by the Department of Education is ludicrous. The Hawaii State Department of Health recommends "...attendees to be at least six feet apart—the equivalent of two arms length..." in public places to "...mitigate the spread of the virus." The Department of Education should be required to follow these same guidelines. Why aren't they? Do they feel like the safety of students is less important than the safety of the general public?

I am currently teaching in my school's summer hub program. We have moved our desks and seats to be six feet apart. I feel safe with this arrangement. In my portable classroom, I can fit 12 students. My fifth graders have been very good at washing their hands frequently, keeping their masks on, keeping their areas clean, and using their own supplies, but they do not sit facing forward the entire school day. Fifth graders can get fidgety and need to move around in their seats. They naturally turn to look at the speaker during class discussions. They turn their heads at the slightest of noise. I can control many things in my classroom, but I cannot control that. Three feet social distancing will **not** keep them safe. If fifth graders have trouble sitting still, I can only imagine how impossible the task of making kindergarteners and first graders facing forward throughout the school day will be. I urge the Board of Education to rethink their suggestion of the 3ft protocol for the safety of the students in Hawaii public schools.

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Mahalo,
Ms. Jaycie Ige

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony July 9

Amanda Lacar <amanda.lacar@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:21 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education of Hawai'i

I am writing to you as a concerned teacher. I will be teaching my first year in the elementary school setting, as a Special Education Kindergarten and 1st grade teacher, after teaching middle school for 8 years. I am extremely lucky because my principal is working to ensure that class size is maxed 12 with 6 feet distance but the majority of my fellow friends are not lucky at their schools.

I am concerned that we are returning to school with the DOE guidance of 3 feet. To ensure the safety of everyone in the school setting and everyone's home setting, I am urging you to enforce 6 feet distance for the first semester of school.

It is better to be over cautious than to allow germs and the possibility of sickness to spread quickly. What immediate harm would it pose to the schools to enforce 6 feet distance? Admin will only have to be creative with their school structure but EVERYONE is safe.

If you are not willing to sit with your fellow BOE members less than 3 feet apart AND without a mask, why are you forcing the teachers and staff to the potential risk of spread to and from students and to and from work to home?

Think of your children or grandchildren, do you feel it is safe for them to return to school sitting 3 feet away for the first semester of school, especially knowing the state will reopen the same month of school.

What harm does it to a child's and teacher's life to have 6 feet distance, what harm? Schools will just have to be creative but you are doing your job to keep all of us safe. Please endorse a 6 feet distance in classrooms and meeting spaces on school campuses across our state. Help us keep our keiki safe.

Mahalo,
Amanda Lacar
Mokulele Elementary
Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Angie Ramey <kinnickbiker@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Angie Ramey and I am a 5th Grade teacher and home grade leader at Ho'okele Elementary School in Kapolei. While this is only my second year living and teaching in Hawaii, I am a veteran educator of 25 years, endorsed as a Teacher Leader on my Hawaii educator license, and have served in leadership roles as a literacy and differentiation specialist, instructional coach as well as classroom teacher. I have learned that educators have a crucial and absolute responsibility to advocate for equitable access to the best education possible for all students, and this includes advocating for the health and safety of our students and staff.
I am, therefore, testifying on Discussion Item VI(A), the reopening plan for schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

First, we are ***encouraging*** staff and students to wear masks, but apparently this will not be a requirement. Right off the bat we are making the simplest and most effective way to protect others and ourselves from being infected with Covid-19 optional. Second, one can only assume that the 3-foot social distance standard we are being asked to maintain in our classrooms instead of the CDC recommendation of 6 feet is because we want to get as many students in classrooms as possible. While we understand face-to-face instruction is the best way to responsively and effectively educate students, we cannot forget that we are living in a pandemic. This means that we must protect each other by doing everything we possible can to social distance using CDC guidelines. It is imperative that we not have such large groups, and we MUST require masks. This is the bare minimum and is really non-negotiable. In addition, I am over the age of 50, and have health risks.These proposed measures are too loose, and they need to be tightened to protect students and staff, especially those who have increased vulnerability to this virus.

School is unconventional right now, but do not underestimate what your educators in the State of Hawaii can do while designing and delivering instruction in-person as well as in an e-learning environment. Your teachers and students have a right to tighter safety guidelines being in place for face-to-face instruction, and deserve your trust in a distance learning setting. We want to be with our students as much as possible but how that looks needs to be as safe as possible. If we are going to implement a blended learning framework, the traditional setting must have the proper precautions in place as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We know that there will be positive cases of Covid-19 as a result of Hawaii public schools reopening. Why would we want to increase the risk by having guidelines that are below the standard CDC recommendations? We've already seen what happens when cities and states ease their reopening restrictions too early, and we are beginning to see hot spots on college campuses as students return to school as well.

You have an opportunity to responsibly act to prioritize safety in order to decrease risk of contracting this virus for students and staff. Our expectations are that you will err on the side of caution.

Respectfully,

Angie Ramey
Grade 5
Ho'okele Elementary School
Kapolei

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Di Sutt <pakedi@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:26 AM

I am an educator at Enchanted Lake Elementary School.
PRIORITY IS SAFETY for STUDENTS, STUDENT'S FAMILIES, and TEACHERS and TEACHER'S FAMILIES.(Staff and staff families included)
The 6 ft. distancing and masks must be mandatory in and outside of classes.
One can always make up or recover from learning lost, but permanent health issues due to covid 19 and death CAN'T be reversed and CAN'T be made up.
My neighbor, a pediatrician at Kapiolani Hospital who had a covid 19 patient, recommends the MASKS (in & outside of class) and 6 ft. distancing.

Sincerely,
Diana Sutton

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Trent Nakashima <trentnakashima@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:30 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To the lawmakers who pretend to know what is going on and pretend to care for the teachers and students of Hawaii,

Can I ask you how often you are in a classroom? I find it disrespectful and downright alarming that you would “make up” rules as you go so that in the best interests of your job, you can put all of the staff and students lives in danger. This thing (Covid-19) is not an exaggerated or made up thing. It is ridiculous that you are making us decide on how we want to die.

We start school on August 4th with kids, and the state reopens on August 1st. We need the money, as little as we are paid, so we need to go along with it, like sheep, but are we being led to the slaughter? It is understood that we need to work, fine, but to say we need to be closer than comfortable is ridiculous. Please rethink this and in Hawaii, we have something called “Pono” meaning to do the right thing; something that many of you preach but don’t practice. I can’t afford to catch this thing, one for losing pay, two for living with people who are susceptible to catching the virus. 3 feet is not doable and unfortunately already have a crowded room, as much as 36 students. We might be 3 feet apart because of necessity of space but that’s a whole other issue. I am writing as if you will read this and like you care. Trent Nakashima

Baldwin High School

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6ft. Distance for Public Schools

tierra knight <localgirlsrule@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:30 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am writing to demand 6ft. distancing in public schools instead of 3ft. This is ridiculous that our Keiki stay 3ft away, versus CDC guidelines states 6ft. If Costco, and other stores and other places require 6ft. distance, then why not our Keiki? Are you going to be there when our Keiki or your end up getting the virus and have to stay in the hospital? Or how's about you can pay for my keiki's medical bills if they end up in the hospital. With the state opening up August 1st to mainland travelers, its only going to get worse. This is NOT OK!! We, the parents want 6ft distance or we just go virtually online until this virus calms down.

Mahalo!!
Tierra Knight , a concerned parent

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Kari Leong <karileong808@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have been a teacher with the DOE for 23 years teaching grades K-5. I was pleased with the MOU that HSTA, the DOE, and BOE agreed to in June 2020. But then I was deeply disappointed that some of the details of the MOU were changed when Dr. Kishimoto described that students will be 3 feet apart instead of the guidelines of the CDC of 6 feet apart in an enclosed space. It was also appalling to read that masks are not required of students and faculty indoors but only suggested. This will not protect the most important people that teach, inspire, and care for students when their parents are at work. Everyone in the classroom and schools will be exposed to germs that each other brings with them, which goes against all guidelines that the CDC has suggested.
I plead with you to please reconsider that when we reopen schools in the Fall, you will be respectful of all employees who are providing a service to the community to nurture our community citizens and leaders. Please keep the MOU document that was signed and agreed upon by all parties to make sure that when schools open, we follow suggested CDC guidelines and consider all procedures to protect teachers and students.
Thank you for your consideration and time.
Aloha,
Kari Leong
Queen Kaahumanu School

State or list the reasons for your position, starting with the most important or compelling reasons. Include any facts, figures, statements, and experiences to support your position. (2) Reiterate your position on the measure (especially if you did not state your position previously within the **testimony**

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

laurenshipley@yahoo.com <laurenshipley@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not allow only 3 feet distance for school age kids. This is not ok for them, and especially the teachers who will be putting themselves at risk.
This is not ok.
Thank you
Lauren Shipley
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lynn Charton <lcharton@mac.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lynn Charton, and I am a first grade teacher at Kekaha Elementary School on the westside of Kauai.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A), specifically regarding 6 foot spacing configurations at school. Due to budget cuts, our first grade classrooms are going to be at 25 students/class. It is imperative that the DOE follow through with the 6-foot standard of spacing at school as indicated in the agreement reached with HSTA. To make that agreement in good faith, and then to go back on that and sacrifice everyone's health at school by letting their be wiggle room and allowing 3-foot spacing is disingenuous. I am very disappointed in Ms. Kishimoto for endorsing that unsafe 3-foot distance, knowing that CDC recommends 6-foot spacing.

Please correct your Reopening Plan language to follow through with the HSTA agreement. It is important that schools know and make decisions on which School Model to choose this week based on the ability to space desks at 6 feet vs. 3 feet.

Thank you,
Lynn Charton

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

J808 Town <j808town12@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:42 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education:

I respectfully ask the board to relook at if our state is really ready to reopen in less than 4 weeks. Are we ready to have over 180,000 students return safely? Please look at what is happening in the recent weeks. On Saturday, a Moanalua student tested positive, and on Sunday a staff at Waipahu summer fun. DOH also said an adult and a child in the same family also tested positive. So children can get it. What if he/she was in a classroom full of kids? This is just the beginning. Can you imagine if this happened when school was in session? Parents, students, and teachers would be in a panic! Dr. Anderson said just the other day that he is worried because of the wide community spread. Positive cases are everywhere! What's even more confusing is that Dr. Green keeps telling the public to stay at least 6 feet or more away and don't gather in groups of more than 10 especially if you are indoors. But the schools are doing the EXACT opposite, we will be only 3 feet apart, have about 20 students, and be indoors for more than 6 hours. How does that make any sense? It's so confusing. The influx of positive cases will happen in schools. It's just a matter of when but why wait until someone gets really sick or ends up in a hospital. We need to be proactive and not reactive but unfortunately, we will end up doing that.

We need to do distance learning until we can see the effects of opening up tourism in August. Not a good idea to reopen schools and tourism both at the same time. Schools and teachers are not babysitters. Some say Distance Learning didn't work because students didn't participate. Of course, some didn't participate because it was made OPTIONAL AND IT WASN'T GRADED. If grades are going to be given and attendance done, parents and students will make sure they do their part. Students will make sure to do the work. We can't say it didn't work when the DOE made it optional and just enrichment work. Teachers knew this would happen and we even fought to be able to send "NEW" work because at first, they said only review work. If DOE works more with disadvantaged school then there will be equity. They can have face to face teaching in small groups and have mobile hub access. Why does it have to be all the schools the same because one size does not fit all? Most schools can be successful in doing distance learning.

Many of you are parents or grandparents, will you be comfortable sending them to school knowing the current situations and how the schools are preparing for the reopening. I would be worrying all day if my child is safe. Please make the correct decision for our students, teachers, and families.

Thank you,
Julie

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mandate 6 feet between student desks

Jessica dos Santos <JdosSantos@myhta.org> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a public charter school teacher and mother of a public school 1st grader. I am writing to urge you to mandate 6 feet between student's desks to comply with CDC guidelines and to keep our keiki and people safe during this pandemic. Thank you for your consideration.

--

Respectfully,
Jessica dos Santos
High School History Teacher
Hawaii Technology Academy
808-676-5444 (office)
808-381-4069 (cell)

hta

myhta.org

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Siani Figueroa <smf58@ymail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have a 6yr old going into 1st grade. I know she will have a difficult time facing the same direction for a long period of time, & I think 3 ft distance is not acceptable if every where literally every where requires a 6ft distance I don't see why the schools would be any different.

Thank you
Siani Figueroa
Big Island-Hilo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening Schools

Kalei & Angel <kaiohale@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a concerned Parent I don't feel you folks are doing enough?

Question 1:

Why will my child be 3 feet apart when CDC requires 6 feet apart? With the Number's climbing can you absolutely guarantee my child WILL not be infected by the virus? Walking into a grocery store we are required to stay on the mark lines before entry exit and cashier to be 6 feet apart and DOE is allowing 3feet? My child gets infected will you be at the hospital with my child? can you guarantee both parents will be able to be them in the hospital with exemption as the hospital require one visitor only for the entire day? I'm on fulough will you be paying for my child's medical bills and medication?

Question 2

Why haven't you required a temperature for each child before entry of class? Teachers are not doctors? Do they have certificates that qualifies them to see visually the child is sick? A teenager will not say he/she isn't feeling well most time they love school rather than being at home doing chores, home alone? Can you guarantee my child will be safe from another child who test positive without you knowing or the teacher who mis the opportunity to send that sick child who showed no symptoms or did not get tested from infecting my child? Are you serious to open up with a 100% that my child is safe? My home has 2 kupuna and my husband who's on dialysis we've followed cdc by quarantine our home and left only for appts or essential needs?

As a parent promise me my child will NOT be infected, temp and visual will be 100% accurate or if not what will your consequence be if my child gets infected by a staff member or another student by your carelessness to miss judge someone who's possibly carding they virus who could infect others and my child. Taking the steps to disinfect and sanitize daily afternoon how bout the mornings when my child walks into clas or leave for recess lunch will the classroom be sanitized every hour? Leaving the class for the restroom how much cleansed will that bathroom be sanitized custodians have other jobs? After every visit it should be hands down cleaned as the virus could be on the toilet sink handle entrance of the classroom leaving? I'm sure the teacher won't stop the class by sanitizing?

Please think this through jus know I'm very cautious where my HOME is important and High risk I need answers for the protection of my child and others who are not infected!

Concerned parent

Aloha

Angel Kaio

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Covid Protections for Teachers and Students are Mandatory!

John Fitzpatrick <fitzformaui@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha honorable Board of Education members,

I am writing because I am concerned about having safe working conditions for our teachers and students when we return back to school in less than a month. I am very concerned because we will be opening up to tourism at the same time and many of our students parents work in that industry. For the most part we did a great job containing Covid 19 in Hawaii and as we open up we threaten the people of Hawaii.

I am writing to ask that you provide teachers and students proper PPE so we are safe. This includes hand sanitizing stations, face masks, small class sizes so we can place chairs 6ft. apart as the CDC guidelines recommend, temperature testing as students and teachers either get on the bus or arrive at school, and Covid 19 testing of faculty and students to make sure we catch outbreaks at schools early on.

I'm really not sure what teaching is going to look like because we can no longer have students do group work, they can't share supplies, and we are all dealing with the threat of Covid 19. But I know school is the only safe haven for so many of my students so I am willing to take risks to give these students the care, neutrition, and love that they deserve.

I am very worried about my colleagues that are at high risk of Covid 19 and my parents are also at high risk so re-opening and taking the risk of catching and contaminating my family and coworkers is a great concern of mine.

Please provide the protections necessary for us to safely open up schools.

Mahalo,
Fitz

John Fitzpatrick
Fitz For Maui
email: fitzformaui@gmail.com
phone: 808-268-1073
85 Mokuahi St.
Makawao,
Hi, 96768

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Robyn Kato <mrsrobynkato@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a parent and substitute teacher. I do NOT support the proposed safety rule of 3 feet apart vs. 6 feet apart as recommended by the CDC.

Please change this proposed setting for the safety of everyone on campus.

Mahalo for your time.

Robyn Kato

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

It has to be 6 feet

Seamus Murphy <seamuspmurphy80@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:06 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha, my name is Seamus Murphy and I am a tenured teacher and parent of a school age child on Maui. This should be a nonissue. The Superintendent agreed to six feet. The DOE and BOE need to show that they bargained these policies in good faith and abide by them. Six feet has been the standard distance everywhere since the beginning of the pandemic, why on earth would it be different in schools?! As an elementary school teacher I can tell you there is no time of the day where 100% of the students are facing the same direction, any other assertion is false. Again this should be a nonissue, hold up your end of the agreement.
Regards
Seamus Murphy
Exceptionalities instructor Princess Nahiena'ena Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

lterada@hawaii.rr.com <lterada@hawaii.rr.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:06 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Hawaii BOE,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My name is Linda Terada and I am the K-2 Literacy Coach at Leihoku Elementary School on the Waianae Coast. I must also disclose that I am 59 years old and could have retired, but being in a leadership position, I felt the need to help my school with a constant influx of new teachers and through this difficult time. I also have ASTHMA and already wear masks on days which triggers my asthma, but, as I read the MOU between the HIBOE and HSTA, I felt I would be able to manage and accept the document which included 6 feet distancing in and out of classrooms as much as possible AND the face coverings language which our school interpreted that “should wear face covering” meant for everyone except for those who are unable to due to condition, or have sensory difficulties…

HOWEVER, after listening to a video conference between Christina Kishimoto, Bruce Anderson, and Sarah Park, which was on the DOE website, I became very disturbed by their discussions specifically regarding the 6 feet physical distancing in classrooms and the wearing of facial coverings. Bruce Anderson’s statements of allowing for "3 feet distancing between students’s desks if they’re facing the front,” is utterly ridiculous. It assumes a very antiquated method of teaching where instruction would be 1-sided… from Teacher to student only. WHO??? of Kindergarteners, 6th graders, middle schoolers, high schoolers OR EVEN ADULTS, can learn by facing forward only and listening to the instructor? Teaching AND LEARNING does NOT occur that way. In addition, to hear Sarah Park advise that students may "wear masks if they feel comfortable” is very disturbing!

Then came Christina Kishimoto’s most recent news conference with the News media explaining 3 feet facing front physical distancing and optional facial coverings… Finally, in the Star Advertiser, Mayor Caldwell’s face mask mandate, which was also approved by Governor Ige—“…mandates the wearing of face coverings at indoor public spaces, including private offices…” SO, WHY ARE STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND ALL STAFF being excluded from that mandate???

For all of the reasons above, and for the safety of my students, their families, and my own family, I IMPLORE THAT YOU be firm and consistent in your guidance that we will practice physical distancing of 6 feet whenever possible, even in the classroom and that we will practice the wearing of facial coverings by all on campus, with few exceptions by those with medical conditions….

Thank you very much for listening to my sincere concerns--
Linda Terada
K-2 Literacy Coach

Leihoku Elem. School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for July 9 BOE meeting

Mike Landes <jmlandes@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board members -

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Mike Landes, I am a teacher at Lahainaluna High School on Maui, and am the parent of two public school students who attend Lahaina Intermediate School and Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School. I am writing today, because I genuinely fear for the safety of my children, my students, their families, and my wife and I. I also write today, because as an AP Government teacher I know that enforcement of contracts is a critical part of a functioning society, and is required under the Constitution and state law.

The superintendent's recent announcement that schools can have student desks 3 feet apart if they are facing the same direction is insane, plain and simple. The science is clear, and countries that are beating this pandemic are following that science: 6 feet of physical distancing slows the spread of this virus dramatically, and saves countless lives. To suggest that our students and teachers can be closer than 6 feet in classrooms is a threat to us all. Are we expendable? Are our students expendable? How about our students' families, including those who may have elderly or immunocompromised relatives in the same household...are they expendable? How many lives is our public school system willing to risk in the effort to reopen and cram bodies into our already overcrowded classrooms? How many deaths are acceptable? My wife and I are both teachers, and our two children are public school students - must the four of us risk our lives for the superintendent and her reopening plan? I don't recall signing up for that.

Also...there's this little thing called contract law. Just a couple weeks ago, this very Board directed the superintendent to engage in negotiations with the teachers union aout the plan for reopening schools. At the conclusion of those negotiations, both sides agreed to and signed a Memorandum Of Understanding that specifies 6 feet of distancing in all meeting spaces. Since students and teachers meet inside classrooms to conduct their activities and lessons, classrooms are obviously meeting spaces. Since the MOU says 6 feet, this Board must mandate that the superintendent and DOE adhere to that 6 feet. Otherwise, I would think the superintendent and DOE would be deemed to have negotiated this MOU in bad faith, and I would imagine legal action could be taken to force the implementation of this MOU as it was agreed to. As an AP Government teacher, my students learn about the Constitution and various laws that mandate that the government uphold and enforce contracts. So even if we were to cold-heartedly disregard the health and safety of our students/teachers/families, I'm sure the members of this Board can at least appreciate the need to mandate that the superintendent follow the law and implement the MOU as written.

Please, Board members, do the right thing and require the superintendent and DOE to follow the 6 feet of distancing in our classrooms.

Mahalo -

Mike Landes
Kihei, Maui

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Natalie Lee <natalie.fujimura@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:09 PM

Hi,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.
My name is Natalie Lee. I teach kindergarten at a Kalihi Waena Elementary School. I also have children that are going into 4th and 5th grades at Anuenue Elementary School.
I feel that having our students 3 feet from one another is not safe for the students, students' families, and teachers. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. We should follow the CDC's recommendation In order to keep all of Hawai'i safe.

Mahalo,
Natalie Lee

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Darrin Chinen <darrin.chinen@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

My name is Darrin Chinen and I am a second grade teacher at Queen Ka‘ahumanu Elementary School. I am emailing to provide my testimony on Discussion item IV (A) regarding reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 SY. I believe that 3 feett distancing is unacceptable and demand that the board mandate 6 feet between desks. Our school should follow the same rules that apply to the public (i.e. businesses and restaurants).

--
Darrin Chinen
2nd Grade Teacher
Queen Ka‘ahumanu Elementary School
(808) 587-4414
darrin.chinen@k12.hi.us

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Testimony

Nicole Mitchell <sachiko96@aol.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm entering my testimony concerning VI(A):

My 2 children attend:

Kanoelani Elementary, will be 3rd grade
Pearl City High School, will be 12th grade

As a very concerned parent of 2 children I find it highly ludicrous and irresponsible to suddenly change the rules recommended by the CDC of reducing the social distancing from 6' to 3'.

When did the DOH and the DOE, including the superintendent decide that 3' was ok unless they're facing each other? I thought as a government entity you were supposed follow the guidelines given by the CDC, and what Governor Ige states in his press conferences.

6' is the safe distance to have the probability of reduction of contracting the disease.

I guarantee you, as a parent of a 8 yr old they will not continue to face forward during the entire time in class. And even my 17 yr old, he will face his friends and talk to them while in class.

It is impossible to control how our kids will interact with each other in class. And keeping them 3' apart instead of 6, is spitting in the face of me as a parent and the teachers and faculty of each and every school. That as a governmental entity you would much rather change the rules to suit your needs to get our kids back into schools, rather than ensure their safety.

It's come to the point where I don't trust either the DOE, superintendent and the DOH. No one seems to know what they're doing and are making things up as they go along. And honestly, the DOE had from April till July to come up with a better plan than this. 4 mos and this is the best you can come up with?

I also don't think you have the safety of my children in mind. Nor the teachers or faculty. I know that a lot of the teachers are older and have a higher chance of contracting the virus even with the best intentions at heart.

Think long and hard about the 3' distance. I don't think it's a good plan. And I think it's about politics, and nothing more.

If the school doesn't have the space come up with a better solution. OR offer every single family/parent the choice of having a hybrid classroom time or just doing online classes.

Also as to your "numbers" of low participation of online or distance learning? While I understand you expected more.

But if you ask yourself, if your child spends a couple of hours working on papers, homework or activities that they know will not be graded nor will they be given credit for it? What is the incentive to do it? Enrichment? Ok maybe.

But as for the high school students and intermediate students - if it doesn't help them long term to graduate? Why do it? If it doesn't allow them to further themselves so they can attain the credits to graduate, or graduate earlier, take less required classes, what's the end game?

This model you put forth of not giving credits or grades was a gaffe on the DOE not as a reflection on the children or their parents. So this is on you. And the numbers you're using to discourage online or distance learning? Is a terrible thing to use against students and parents.

Also, when school does return - and since daycare will not be available, what are parents supposed to do with their kids? Remember some parents can't afford daycare for their kids. They usually ask family members including the grandparents to watch their kids. And while our kids aren't as high risk to catching COVID, the older generation is. So with the 3' distance you are also "hoping" that our children will not bring it home and give it to their family members.

School reopening on 8/4 or 8/5? With the reopening of the mainland travel restrictions being relaxed on 8/1 is a disaster waiting to happen.

Amend the 3' rule to 6', allow parents to decide on what model they'd like to use. Hybrid or online. Or find a better solution. I will not put my health, or my children's health or my families health at risk because of a sloppy decision made by you.

Sincerely,

Nicole Mitchell, a concerned parent

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Gail Batalona <gbatalona@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Gail Batalona <gbatalona@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern,

It saddens me to think that our kids aren't being protected in public schools. 3 foot distancing is absolutely dangerous! We need to protect our future!

Please rethink this..the Keiki are our island treasures! 💝

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lori <lori.eiko@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Lori Harris and I am a parent of a child attending a DOE school as well as a school counselor at a DOE school. I am curious who will be held responsible for the increase of cases that we all know WILL happen if we allow 3ft distancing between our students, knowing full and well that the CDC recommends 6 feet of distance between people? Who will be held responsible if a teacher becomes ill? Who will pay for the medical bills and who will take responsibility if God forbid, a child were to become infected and pass away? Will it be the Department of Education?

Please consider the fact that we are dealing with the health and safety of our keiki, the teachers that work so hard to educate them and the families of those educators. Please follow the CDC guidelines, as they are the experts in disease control. Nowhere, absolutely nowhere does the CDC say 3 ft of distancing between students is safe.

Sincerely,
Lori Harris

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Jeffrey Duggan <konajduggan@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Jeff Duggan and I am a Social Studies Teacher at Konawaena High School.

I vehemently disagree with the recently stated plan by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement.

I implore the Board, State, DOE and all concerned parties to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan, as supported by the CDC and all respectable infectious disease experts, as well state and federal epidemiologists.

Clearly, teachers and students, as well as all staff, will encounter less risk and be safer with the universally recognized 6 foot rule. Please make the responsible decision - it is literally a life and death decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Duggan, JD, M.Ed.
Konawaena High School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Alyson kent <alyson0627@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
Please adhere to the CDC guidelines and have all schools and classroom desks and tables be 6 feet apart. Only allowing 3 feet apart is putting our children at risk, their families and our teachers.
As a teacher, I am nervous to teach in a classroom set up with only 3 feet apart between students. Classrooms are already crowded enough. We need to protect our children and their health.

As a parent, I have been keeping my child home since March to protect his health and well being as well as my families. I do not feel safe sending him to school with only 3 feet between him and another student in an over crowded classroom.

I have done my part since March and I expect you to do the same. I followed the state guidelines and have not traveled to keep my child safe. I expect the schools to keep our children safe while in your care.

I also feel school should not start on August 4th. To many tourists would just have started coming to the island. Plus, starting on or around in classroom on August 14 will give people who have traveled the opportunity to not send their children to school for the 2 weeks. To many people will traveled up until July 31stand send their children to school Without following guidelines. We should start with online school from Aug 4-14.

Also, 2 children per bus seat is not 6 feet apart. All seats should be seated with 1 child per seat! It is not following CDC guidelines to have 2 children per seat. It is unsafe for all the students. You are putting them at risk.

Thank you,
Alyson
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Marianne Winfield <marianne_winfield@lahaina.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Marianne Winfield and have taught English at Lahainaluna High School for the past eight years. Before that, I taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District for almost a decade.

In a few weeks, I will be 66 years old and have a 70 year-old husband who is recovering well from a stroke. I still have a lot of energy and feel passionate about education. (Last year, I had 152 freshman students in six classes and only 12 failed.)

This year, administration tells us we will be teaching classes of 20 students for five hours a day for five-week blocks. We cannot maintain social distancing and we do not have enough custodians to sweep the classrooms, let alone disinfect the bathrooms. Teachers at my school, in good times, have to sweep and mop their own floors, dust surfaces, counters, and clean 30 desks before and after school. We just heard the State has removed yet another custodial position. In a pandemic. During this time of fear, contagion and infection.

How is this not an incentive for me to step away from the classroom? It’s obviously too risky for me and my family to risk our lives.

My wealth of knowledge will be lost to the children of Maui unless we are permitted the humane alternative of distance learning for the remaining months until a vaccine is available.

Mahalo,
Marianne Winfield

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony 6'

Aaron Kzk <aaronkzk@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:46 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of a mandatory 6' spacing rule in Hawaii's public schools upon reopening this fall relating to discussion item VI(A). Because of the massive collective efforts, economic and personal sacrifices of Hawaii residents and the actions of the state and county governments, Hawaii has the lowest covid 19 mortality rate in the country. I understand the urgent need for schools to reopen, particularly for less privelidged students. But It would be a tragedy to render these efforts in vain by reopening in a way that will risk the gains made and the lives of our valued educators and fellow citizens. Please keep in mind Hawaii's limited resources, use science based strategies and err on the side of extra safety when opening our schools.

Thank you for your consideration,
Aaron Kierzek

Get Outlook for Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Clarice Forsyth <clarice.forsyth@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:54 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi Board,

I believe students should follow the same guidelines of being 6 feet apart when in class. At work we have employees needing to be 6 feet apart and making adjustments as needed. Utilizing other areas such as the library, computer classes, other offices to accommodate the movement of employees.

I feel it should be the same with students, if the Cafeteria, gym, libraries and other classes (computer lab, enrichment class etc.) need to be utilized with desks separated and supplying students with computers and headphones to do virtual classes on certain days to socially distance. We should do that, not all parents have the ability to do their jobs from home and some don't have family that can help. Does that mean they lose their job because their employer will not give them the option to work from home and parents needing to stay home because 1/2 the students need to stay home?

There should be more efforts in having a balance between being safe and having students on campus at various different places and being excused staggered.

Clarice Forsyth

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

r jakita <rkjakita@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Rebecca Akita and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Hau'ula Elementary and my children attend Laie Elementary and Kahuku High & Intermediate School. My husband is also a teacher at Kahuku High & Intermediate School.

As both a parent and a teacher, I am not comfortable with nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is a safe enough space between children to keep them safe and protect them from possible risk of infection. They are able to still reach out to each other and lean over to each other, which lessens the distance even more. The universities are using the 6 ft distance for adult students so why are we being asked to have half that distance in the classroom with children? Elementary age children are not as careful and cautious with social distancing and safe practices. Often they do not cover their mouths when they sneeze or cough and wash their hands each time after they do. As I teacher, I see many of them touch their noses and mouths throughout the day. They often put pencils and pens in their mouths.

As a special education teacher, I am often in a small group setting or at the desk of an individual asking for specific help. I have been in an inclusion setting mainly so I am helping other students also. We have some that have emotional and behavioral issues and at times classroom management is already difficult because of these issues. The additional time and energy that will be needed to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.
Additionally, I feel that personal protection items are difficult to find and buy along with sanitation items such as Clorox wipes. I think teachers will need to be provided with sufficient personal protection and sanitation items before starting school. I live in a multi-generational home. My Mom is 73 years old and I have a granddaughter that is 6 weeks old. My interaction at work if not safe, puts them at risk also. In addition, my son and husband both have asthma and my son also has severe allergies. He has been in the ER three times because he struggled with breathing during allergic reactions. He is high risk along with my Mom for this virus. Because of this and other reasons, I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I do not want to send my children to school if I know the school is not going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. If these are not practiced, it is putting our children and teachers at risk along with the families that they go home to. Many families in Hawaii have many generations living in one home like we do. I definitely care about my children’s education. Besides my husband and I, Mom and Dad are also educators along with two of my sisters. However, my family's safety is my priority. Our family has been practicing good hygiene and social distancing, but I cannot trust that all families are doing the same. I keep my children home from school when they are sick, but I know for a fact that not all parents keep their kids home when they are sick, both at my children's school and the school that I teach at. We want our children to go back to school. They miss being in school and they miss their friends. School is very educational, but it is also a very social environment and not practicing safe social distancing is putting every one of them and their families at risk.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Akita
480-318-0248

Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

S. Gough <splendid_splenda@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:59 PM
Reply-To: "S. Gough" <splendid_splenda@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Saint-Marie Gough, I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I teach at Aliamanu Elementary school and my child attends Aliamanu Middle school, both located in the great Aiea-Moanalua-Radford complex. A complex with a high military population and low-mid income families. We are a close-knit community that care about our students, teachers, and the community we work in.

Like many, I was looking forward to the DOE's plans for reopening schools. How will my son receive his education in our current situation? How will I as a teacher keep my students, who are below the age of 5 and IDEA eligible, safe? How will we successfully socially distance at 6ft in our Hawaii schools? I was dismayed when I found that DOE has decided not to follow these guidelines and instead insisting we can make 3ft work? The truth is 3ft is not enough space to allow safe physical distance. When I go to other state facilities I have to stay 6 feet away from others, and you know what unfortunately happens? People enter that safe bubble. Yet, we are asking our children to stay 3 feet away? That space will quickly shrink and possibly expose students and staff.

Please keep our students and staff safe and follow the CDC guidelines for physical distancing to be 6 ft. Help keep us safe. Be an example that we can successfully open our schools without cutting corners on safety.

Thank you for your time,
Saint-Marie Gough

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nora Pollard <pollardnoraa@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Nora Pollard and I am a Substitute Teacher with the DOE, in central district. While the pandemic has restricted my ability to work and I miss the opportunity to be involved with the student community at this time, I'm also extremely anxious about heading back into work.

Being a Substitute means I can be in a new environment every day, and during pre-pandemic times even this meant I was exposed to more cold and flu viruses than a teacher who stays in the same room every day. It would be typical that every couple months I'd wake up to find myself with a new cough or other symptom and need to take time away from the classroom so I didn't infect the students at a new location.

There are facts we know about Coronavirus; 1) that it is incredibly contagious, more than the flu or common cold, and 2) that often spread can be asymptomatic, only discovered when it spreads to create a new cluster and a previously healthy set of people become symptomatic.

If we are returning to classrooms, we need to do everything we can to make them the safest environment. Three feet of distance between students, especially young ones, is not enough. Six feet is a minimum and there can be no good to come from trying to cheat that requirement.

Worse than the thought of myself getting the Coronavirus is the thought of me picking it up and somehow accidentally spreading it, with the distance barrier we put up between children not being enough to stop it from spreading among those new environments.

I hope we make the right, safe choices when we go back to schools.

Thank you for your time,
Nora Pollard

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

A. Ndi. <kulasurfa@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:24 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education members,

This email is in regards to discussion item VI (A). My name is Allison Na‘auao-Dickson. I‘m a Kindergarten teacher at Kula Elementary School. I will have 17-18 students in my portable if all goes as planned in August. If I were to strictly follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet between every student in my class and myself, I would need a larger classroom or additional teachers to help spread the students out. Since our school is not financially able to either build more classrooms and hire new teachers at this point in time, the 6 feet rule seems unrealistic. My testimony is in support of 3 feet of social distancing. Keep in mind that 5 year olds will forget to social distance themselves, they need physical closeness to others also known as social skills and need time to physically explore to make concrete learning connections. Are we expected to closely measure and monitor 3 feet or 6 feet of social distancing? Constant monitoring of social distancing will be a hindrance to teaching and learning.

Thank you for your time,
Allison Na‘auao-Dickson

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Leah Castillo <leah.castillo84@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:24 PM
To: Testimony Boe <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Leah C. My children attend Royal Elementary. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

I can say for a fact that my younger child would not be able to sit still a whole entire class facing one specific direction. I understand that the children will be wearing masks, but realistically that is another problem on its own. Especially for the schools with no AC, wearing a mask will be quite difficult with out any complaining and touching them.

All other places including hospitals, malls, and grocery stores all implement the 6 feet social distancing, why should school be any different? Our children should be our priority! We need to take care of the old and the young.

teachers

Carol Holland <chrosetta@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@BOE.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha
I teach 10th Grade at Maui High and I must be honest I miss my kids terribly, I can't wait to get back in the classroom and see my students in person - HOWEVER I am not a sacrificial lamb and that's how I feel, I feel like I am being asked to put myself who is high risk (cystic lung disease) and my family (including elderly parents) who live with us at risk. Three feet is ridiculous in terms of distancing and it shows a disregard for CDC and WHO recommendations. IF students return to the classroom we need to enforce 6 feet social distancing and ensure sufficient air flow in the classroom to minimize potential exposure to the virus. Anything else is dangerous and criminal.
That said I have neither seen nor heard about what protocols will be in place should someone test positive - who is doing the contact tracing? Does the whole school go on two-week quarantine? Do we even have enough testing to ensure the safety of teachers and students?
If we went back to school right now as Maui county is still closed with mandatory 14 day quarantines then my concerns are somewhat lessened since we are doing rather well in our numbers of positive cases again HOWEVER when we open to tourism we open to viral exposure - even if tourists are tested 3 days before arriving they could and may contract the virus en route and infect people on Maui before realizing they are sick and since many parents work in hospitality the risk of exposure increases exponentially. Based on data and numbers from the continental USA it stands to reason that once we "open" Maui county without a vaccine in place and without a verified successful treatment protocol we are putting teachers and students at risk for no reason other than to "rush" to open up. At what cost ? Whose life ? Mine, Yours, Your elderly parents ???
We need to move carefully, slowly and take into account data and information from places already proceeding as we make our choices and decisions.
Also if teachers die from the covid virus what is the protocol in terms of their families and retirement - many would consider it a work related death - i.e. I would not have died or got sick if I had stayed home.
Thanks for your consideration
Carol Holland

Carol H Holland, M.Sc. Oceanography, M.A Secondary Education
"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined." -Henry David Thoreau

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

June Kawaguchi <hakinidevi@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” Allowing students 3 feet distancing is not safe. Using language such as, "should wear," regarding masks and "whenever possible," regarding seating arrangement allows the option to do the opposite because it's not mandatory. That would mean that I have a classroom of students not wearing masks and crammed in together just like before the pandemic.

You know that teachers don't go into teaching for the money, right? Yet we're expected to buy PPE supplies out of our pocket to be repaid later. What if we need that money to get by each month?

Our public school system was already laden with so many problems before the pandemic and now it seems that you're throwing small band-aids at us expecting that we'll be satisfied with crumbs, again. At what point will you take this virus seriously? How many teachers and students will have to get sick or die before you do? Maybe some will be lucky and survive the virus, only to have a debilitated body that can't get back to school/work. I understand the need to get back to school and get back to work, but it's difficult to learn or teach when you're dead.

Regards,
June Kawaguchi
Nanakuli High & Intermediate School

Testimony

erin noordhoff <huinaluseat4@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov, Hawaii State Teachers Association <info@hsta.org>

My name is Erin M. Williams and I am a 39-year veteran teacher currently teaching at Kealakehe High School. I am 59.7 years- old and my husband is 66 years-old; this being so, we are considered "at risk" for contracting COVID-19. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I hereby demand that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with a minimum of six feet between student desks. A decision to configure only three feet between student desks endangers our keiki, our teachers, and our communities. Furthermore, it is also a breach of trust between the Memorandum of Understanding between the HIDOE and the HSTA. The published news of HIDOE's decision to configure only three feet between student desks was demeaning, disturbing, and deflating--even at Costco, people must keep six feet between them at all times--why would the HIDOE put our keiki and kumu at risk?

Should the HIDOE proceed with their plan to configure only three feet between student desks, I will seek early retirement. I will never put my husband, family, or community in harm's way.

I thank you for your most serious consideration.

Erin M. Williams

Kealakehe High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please 6 feet apart considerations for our keikis

Kim Amodo <kimamodo@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Please be firm and consistent when it comes to our children's and teacher's safety! I am so worried for my own children's safety and health. We have to get it right and not leave it to chance.

We shouldn't be playing Russian roulette with our teachers and children!

We have to take proactive and preventive measures NOT reactivate approaches!

Thank You so much for your attention to my concerns and request for reconsideration!

Kim Amodo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Returning to School

Tammy Hornbeck <tammy.hornbeck2019@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:50 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>
Cc: "sizumi@kapunahala.k12.hi.us" <sizumi@kapunahala.k12.hi.us>, "mmiyahana@kapunahala.k12.hi.us" <mmiyahana@kapunahala.k12.hi.us>

My name is Tammy Hornbeck. I am an FSC K-2 Special Education teacher teaching at Kapunahala Elementary in Kaneohe. I have been a teacher here on the island for one year. The 2020-2021 school year will be year two.

I am writing regarding the proposed guidelines for returning to school. I am **terrified** of returning to school. While I am not as practiced with technology as many teachers; ending the 2019-2020 school year in Distance Learning, I learned. The students/parents will learn too.

I worked more hours and longer days and most weekends, but I never failed to provide instruction for my students. Yes, it was hard. And though I don't exactly look forward to doing it again; I prefer to teach from home to returning to an unsafe environment for me and my students.It will probably be simpler for me to give you the bullet points of the pros and cons that I am **extremely** concerned with:

* No, 3 feet is not far enough for students to be safe--6 feet is better, but still not safe.
* My fiance works for the hospital; they are keeping the number of cases quiet because of panic. I fear for his life daily. This is not over. We have no vaccine. We have no cure. It is too soon.
* I teach younger students and there is NO WAY they will understand or remember the safety guidelines. They touch, they need closeness from people, they have disabilities so the guidelines will be impossible to implement much less enforce.
* The main reason parents want students to return is for social reasons. I understand school provides that, but being entertained is not more important than being alive. The other reason is that parents are having to implement the lessons and that is difficult and time consuming---welcome to our world. Teachers have long since lost the respect and value they deserve and the fact that their salaries are the FIRST thing to be cut/reduced for budget issues proves that.
* I am not a tenured teacher. My fiance and I spent all our savings to move to Hawaii in order to be able to retire in a climate we desire. That was the plan. To move here, work for the next 5-10 years and retire and stay. The housing costs and expense of everything else has made that difficult and if my salary is cut we will have no choice but to leave the island.
* I have to have my job. We cannot stay if I don't work. I will have to return if you say so, but I feel if you want and need your teachers to stay; they should be the ones to make this decision. Already the pandemic has flooded the system with teachers retiring early. Before this and the pandemic; there was already a teacher shortage. I don't see why you are not giving them the CHOICE of either returning with the guidelines or teaching distance learning from home. IT IS THEIR LIFE! IT SHOULD BE THEIR CHOICE! I want the choice...

This is how I feel. I am sure I am not the only one. Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

Tammy Hornbeck
51-636 Kamehameha Hwy
Apt. 314

Kaaawa, HI 96730
650-404-7190
tammy.hornbeck2019@yahoo.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

edrada.marjorie@gmail.com <edrada.marjorie@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 1:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Marjorie M. Edrada parent of:
16 yr old, James Campbell HS (pre-condition Asthma)
14 yr old , James Campbell HS
12 yr old, Ewa Makai Middle School

I, Marjorie M. Edrada, testify that the recommended 3 ft desk distance is NOT in accordance with CDC guidelines "The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19"

I urge DOE to follow CDC guidelines or risk students of higher exposure to the virus. The goal is to "educate in a safe environment". My children still need face to face instructions but in a manner deemed safe by CDC, who are the health experts, not the DOE. We are no longer in a place, in a race, to meet national standards with today's current situation; instead, we should be concerned about stimulating student growth mindset to adjust to today's circumstances. Take this as a learning opportunity to educate on health, racism, and challenges to our changing society.

Parent,
Marjorie Edrada

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet apart

Kai Bell <anoiakbell@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My son is currently attending an elementary school in the district. I have read that you are staying it is okay to be only 3 feet apart. I also work with Covid positive people. I strongly implore you to please reconsider the distancing to 6 feet apart. The general public is told to distance by 6 feet, why is it that all of a sudden it is ok for children to only be 3 feet apart, full well knowing that the hygiene is not an impeccable one. The ravage I have seen with Covid 19 take a toll on the body is very disheartening. I can't imagine the toll on a child if one school were to have a breakout. Please reconsider for the health of the children, staff and community to require a 6 feet distancing from one another.

Regards,

Kaiona Bell

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 ft. Distance is Dangerous

CO Okuda <kaaina808@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Seating students 3 ft. apart is not much farther than the norm (if desks are arranged side by side with no distance in between). A concern I have is that my school has a notable Pacific Islander population who holds 25% of Hawaii's covid cases (https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/what-you-should-know/current-situation-in-hawaii/). This group commonly has large households which include aunts, uncles, and cousins. I also wonder how parents feel about this standard and hope it will not deter them from sending their child to school.

I will follow whichever guidelines are given; however, I believe that the 3 ft. distancing creates an unsafe setting. In any case, I will still separate myself from students at 6 ft. minimum.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6ft between desks

Liana G <poohbear4554@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello! My name is Liana Garma and I work at Mililani High School. I'm writing because I would like to demand that it is mandated that student desks are 6 feet apart in the classroom. If this is what is being recommended by health organizations, it needs to be standard in our classrooms to protect both the students and the teachers.

I would also like to ask that unless the student has a note from their doctor as to why they can't wear a mask, that all students and staff are required to wear a mask in classrooms. I understand this is a controversial topic, however, it is also for the safety of all involved. We are trying to keep the students open as best we can and hopefully for the entire school year because we know distance learning wasn't very successful during the 4th quarter.

Thank you for listening and your consideration. I hope you will really think about these as all us teachers really do want to get back in the classroom with our students, but we also want it to be as safe as possible for everyone and these are 2 measures that can definitely help with that.

Sincerely,
Liana Garma

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Spacing

Kim <kkmart@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Afternoon
I am a public school teacher and a parent of a public school student. I am asking that the DOE make sure they are doing everything possible to ensure a safe return for every individual on campus and make sure we are following the CDC's recommendation of 6 feet of spacing not 3 feet. We are all worried about our health and need to feel our employer supports us and values our safety!
Mahalo
Kim Holokai

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Henry <wonghenry61@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sent as set forth below:

Aloha,

My name is Henry Wong and I am a Special Educations teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary.

I disagree with the recently stated plan by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement.

I implore the Board, State, DOE and all concerned parties to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan, as supported by the CDC and all respectable infectious disease experts, as well as state and federal epidemiologists.

Clearly, teachers and students, as well as all staff, will encounter less risk and be safer with the universally recognized 6 foot rule. Please make the responsible decision - it is literally a life and death decision.

Thank you,

Henry Wong
Alvah Scott Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kari Laba <kari.laba@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-21 School Year. I am demanding that the board mandate the classrooms be configured with 6 feet between student desks in order to keep our students and staff safe.

Kari Laba
Kailua High School
Math Department

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Renee Obrien <msreneeobrien@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a Special Education Teacher at Lihikai Elementary on Maui. I am also a single parent of 2 children (5th and 10th grader) who attend Kihei Charter School on Maui.

I would like to take a moment to address item VI(A): Presentation on Department OC Educator's comprehensive plan for reopening of schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The students that I teach have special needs and some are medically fragile. All of the students, teachers, and other adult staff members have the right to return to a safe environment that adheres the the CDC and DOE guidelines of maintaining 6-feet distance. This is required at the UH schools, stores, and restaurants and should absolutely be enforced within our public schools as well.

Please do not risk the heath and safety of our students and our staff! Mandate maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.

Mahalo for prioritizing the heath and safety of our students and staff.

Renee O'Brien
Special Education Teacher
Concerned Parent

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Feet Distancing UNACCEPTABLE

Cheryl Hamane <hamanec002@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

With HI's COVID-19 numbers rising daily, 3 feet social distancing will not be safe for all people on campus. But especially teachers and students. The DOE needs to look at long term solutions not short term ones so kids can return on 8/4. If we do not keep everyone safe from the get go - schools will be forced to shutdown completely. Especially with the state opening up the economy to tourists on 8/1.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony regarding DoE's plan for reopening schools.

Michael Press <press.michaeld@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:54 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Greetings,
My name is Michael Press and I am a 7/8 Social Studies teacher and Department Head at Ilima Intermediate School in Campbell/Kapolei complex on Oahu. I am submitting testimony opposing the DoE re-opening the schools WITHOUT the CDC required 6 feet of space between students at a minimum.

My chief concern stems from the convergence of the start of in person school, the reopening of tourism on Aug. 1st and the post 4th of July weekend spike. The conjunction of these 3 events means we should be more careful not less. I want nothing more than to be in the classroom with my students. That is why I became a teacher. However, teachers are charged by their stakeholders to protect their children. So I can not in good faith support going back to school with only 3 feet between students. We can hope that adult intransigence, institutional failure, and political cowardice aren't enough to restart the exponential spread of the disease. We can hope that the daily lapses in judgment made every day on every campus, at scale across more than 56 million students herded into 132,000 K-12 schools in the United States, aren't enough to derail the public health outcomes we desire. We can pretend that school-age children are too young to suffer the worst of this disease, even as researchers clarify the link between Covid-19 and symptoms comparable to Kawasaki disease in children. We can hope that these cascading factors, along with the general likelihood that Covid-19 will ravage the U.S. again in fall, don't force us to close schools again, without the public infrastructure or professional preparation needed to resume distance learning.

Another concern is teachers are now at a breaking point in which many view returning to work as a potential detriment to their lives and the lives of their family members. I can see it in their social media posts. We will watch five scenarios play out this fall when classroom teaching returns in August:
(1) Anyone at or near retirement will probably take early retirement if we try to start school in the fall. Given the number of comorbidities that plague Americans' health, this shouldn't come as a surprise,
(2) Those teachers with spouses that can afford to be a stay-at-home parent will stay at home,
(3) Pregnant and those intending to get pregnant teachers will take a year off and potentially never return,
(4) Teacher's education graduates and those in their first three years without the "golden handcuffs" will leave the teaching career path,
And, (5) there will be a minimum number of substitutes. Most substitutes are retirees looking for extra income or recent graduates that couldn't find a teaching job. Retirees will not come back to sub.

If we have to return to the classroom then we need to do it in the safest way possible. Doing this will keep the students, teachers and their families healthy and keep teachers in the profession.

Thank you for your attention,
Michael Press

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY for Discussion Item VI(A) DOE

Sarah Sunada <iamsarahrs@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Sarah Sunada and I am speaking as both a teacher, cancer survivor and caretaker for my elderly parents and inlaws.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I have been a teacher for 20 years and have lots of experience. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students that are 5 and 6 year olds.

My school says that we can fit up to 26 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. If they turn to look at each other, they will not be facing forward anymore. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children? If the Mayor, Lieutenant Governor as well as the lawmakers in Washington DC are asking us to stay 6 feet apart and WEAR masks, then why is the DOE not abiding by these same terms. If we go out in public we need to wear a face cover or face a $5000 fine. Why is it that in an enclosed classroom with so many bodies this mandate is quickly forgotten.

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time and put unneeded social and emotional pressure on our keiki.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless. I strongly feel that currently the school cannot guarantee or even half guarantee that the children will be safe.

Lastly, as a cancer survivor and caretaker for the elderly I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. My inlaws live with us and they are approaching 80 years old. I also take care of my own mother who is the same age. I cannot put them at risk! I want to be able to go back to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks at all times. I know having to wear masks all day will be very uncomfortable but I am willing to also be uncomfortable to preserve the health and safety of the children in my class and my own family. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about the children’s education, but their safety is priority. We practice social distancing, and have not traveled even though we had our heart set on traveling this summer. I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same and have already heard of families from last year traveling to the Mainland. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I

implore our leaders to make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk. I am extremely concerned for the health and well being of our community and locals that live here. At my school, we have many military families and they are coming and going to states that have huge spikes such as California, Texas, Florida and New York. I cannot understand who the DOE /DOH plans to turn a blind eye and put everyone in a "classroom / ohana bubble" at risk. Please help us!

Sincerely,
Sarah

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Laurie Faure <laurie.faure@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 2:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Laurie Faure and I am the STEM RT for KMR Distric,t and former teacher at Kauluwela Elementary School for the past two years. I would like to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

The HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

I implore you for the safety of students, teachers, school staff and our communities to uphold the agreement reached and DO NOT ALLOW separation of students and staff members in meeting spaces to be reduced to a three-foot policy. Spacing of six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length is absolutely necessary and a bare minimum. Please do not ask anyone to put themselves at additional risk with a three-foot policy.

Please do the right thing for us all!

Sincerely,

Laurie Faure

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Janine Arisumi <janine.arisumi@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Janine Arisumi and I am an English Language Arts Teacher at Radford High School. I would like to submit testimony for Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I vehemently disagree with the recently stated plan by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

I implore the Board, State, DOE and all concerned parties to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan, as supported by the CDC and all respectable infectious disease experts, as well as state and federal epidemiologists.

Clearly, teachers and students, as well as all staff, will encounter less risk and be safer with the universally recognized 6 foot rule. Please make the responsible decision - it is literally a life and death decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Janine Arisumi
Radford High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Joyce Macdougall <sukejo22@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This testimony is regarding discussion VI (a).....requiring only 3feet between desks during a health pandemic is not a guideline of the CDC...this new fabricated guideline
puts the risk of students...teachers...staff and all their families and friends at risk for contracting the Coronavirus
Students desks MUST be 6feet from each other...3feet would be reckless
Respectfully
Joyce macdougall
Substitute Teacher for the County of Maui since 1993
Tell # 808 446 4681

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Jane Fee, I have no school age children but I live within 1000 feet of an elemschool and feel we need to take this virus very seriously and take extreme precautions in order to keep it from becoming another serious outbreak. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools “space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible” to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are “not spaced apart” as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Jane Fee <bj77fee@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Only requiring 3 feet between each places the students and then all adults working with them, then all the people these children and adults come into contact with in danger.

Please reconsider nd require at least 6 feet between students in the upcoming school year. The students and teachers, their families and the general public deserve this.
Mahalo,
Jane Fee

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Matthew Snyder <msnyder@mwis.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Matthew Snyder and I am a Lifetime Fitness Teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School.

I vehemently disagree with the recently stated plan by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement.

I implore the Board, State, DOE and all concerned parties to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan, as supported by the CDC and all respectable infectious disease experts, as well as state and federal epidemiologists.

Clearly, teachers and students, as well as all staff, will encounter less risk and be safer with the universally recognized 6 foot rule. Please make the responsible decision - it is literally a life and death decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Snyder, M.Ed.
8th grade Lifetime Fitness
Maui Waena Intermediate School

Matthew Snyder
8th grade Lifetime Fitness
(808) 276-9996

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Matthew Snyder <matt_snyder1@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:21 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Matthew Snyder and I am a Lifetime Fitness Teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School.

I vehemently disagree with the recently stated plan by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement.

I implore the Board, State, DOE and all concerned parties to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan, as supported by the CDC and all respectable infectious disease experts, as well as state and federal epidemiologists.

Clearly, teachers and students, as well as all staff, will encounter less risk and be safer with the universally recognized 6 foot rule. Please make the responsible decision - it is literally a life and death decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Snyder, M.Ed.
8th grade Lifetime Fitness
Maui Waena Intermediate School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

“Testimony”

Kalei & Angel <kaiohale@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a concerned Parent I don’t feel you folks are doing enough?

Question 1:

Why will my child be 3 feet apart when CDC requires 6 feet apart? With the Number’s climbing can you absolutely guarantee my child WILL not be infected by the virus? Walking into a grocery store we are required to stay on the mark lines before entry exit and cashier to be 6 feet apart and DOE is allowing 3feet? My child gets infected will you be at the hospital with my child? can you guarantee both parents will be able to be them in the hospital with exemption as the hospital require one visitor only for the entire day? I’m on fulough will you be paying for my child’s medical bills and medication?

Question 2

Why haven’t you required a temperature for each child before entry of class? Teachers are not doctors? Do they have certificates that qualifies them to see visually the child is sick? A teenager will not say he/she isn’t feeling well most time they love school rather than being at home doing chores, home alone? Can you guarantee my child will be safe from another child who test positive without you knowing or the teacher who mis the opportunity to send that sick child who showed no symptoms or did not get tested from infecting my child? Are you serious to open up with a 100% that my child is safe? My home has 2 kupuna and my husband who’s on dialysis we’ve followed cdc by quarantine our home and left only for appts or essential needs?

As a parent promise me my child will NOT be infected, temp and visual will be 100% accurate or if not what will your consequence be if my child gets infected by a staff member or another student by your carelessness to miss judge someone who’s possibly carding they virus who could infect others and my child. Taking the steps to disinfect and sanitize daily afternoon how bout the mornings when my child walks into clas or leave for recess lunch will the classroom be sanitized every hour? Leaving the class for the restroom how much cleansed will that bathroom be sanitized custodians have other jobs? After every visit it should be hands down cleaned as the virus could be on the toilet sink handle entrance of the classroom leaving? I’m sure the teacher won’t stop the class by sanitizing?

Please think this through jus know I’m very cautious where my HOME is important and High risk I need answers for the protection of my child and others who are not infected!

Concerned parent

Aloha

Angel Kaio

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: Mandate six feet distance for our schools

roeleno@juno.com <roeleno@juno.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:30 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE members,

My name is Romeo Eleno and I'm a teacher at Lanai High & Elementary School. I am writing to demand that the board mandate a 6' distance for all students and staff.

We need to keep everyone safe and last I heard: Wearing a mask, keeping social distance of 6', and washing hands were the main guidelines from the CDC. It's truly careless to change the distance to 3 feet. Please do not put everyone's health in jeopardy.

I look forward to hearing BOE making the right decisions as staff and students start preparing to open schools throughout the State. Our keiki and staff deserve to be safe at all cost.

Mahalo for your time & consideration,
Romeo Eleno
Lanai City, Maui District

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - DOE Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for SY 20-21

Katherine Sandor <kesandor@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Hello,

My name is Katherine Sandor.
I am a Kindergarten teacher at August Ahrens Elementary School (AAES) in Waipahu, Hawaii.

I am emailing today to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that schools space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are “not spaced apart” as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Our students and school staff should not be knowingly put into a situation that is known to be high-risk and has the potential to be deadly. As teachers, we are willing to consistently go above and beyond for our students, as demonstrated by the efforts teachers put in to dive into online learning in the last quarter of the 19-20 SY. We will do whatever it takes to help our students. This includes keep them safe, healthy and alive. Teachers should not be asked, or required, to risk our lives during this pandemic.
If schools cannot re-open while adhering to the CDC recommendations, schools should remain online until those recommendations can be met. Putting our students, families, and teachers at risk of infection and death is dangerous and unacceptable. Our vulnerable children should receive at least the same level of protection as the public outside of schools.

Therefore, I urge the Board of Education to commit to a requirement of 6 feet of space between each student.

Thank you for your time and attention to this crucial matter.

Sincerely,
Katherine Sandor

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Katrina Karl <katrina.karl@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Katrina Karl and I am a teacher at Waipahu High School. I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I would like the Board of Education to mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet of space between student desks, not only three feet. It is dangerous, inappropriate, and inconsiderate to suggest that our public schools should not follow the spacing guidelines that are so widely accepted in other businesses and workplaces. With only three feet of space between student desks, we will undoubtedly facilitate the spread of coronavirus within our schools. This inadvisable three-foot spacing will in all likelihood increase the risk of students spreading coronavirus between each other and to their family members at home.

Katrina Karl

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Egdamin, Robyn <robyn_egdamin@pcel.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,
My name is Robyn Egdamin and I teach at Pearl City Elementary School. I have taught for 25 years.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: 3 feet and student mask testimony

arose46054@aol.com <arose46054@aol.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 3:52 PM
Reply-To: arose46054@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a special education teacher at Ilima Intermediate School in Ewa Beach. I am very disturbed with the wording of the plan to reopen.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools “space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible” to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are “not spaced apart” as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. In New York City schools have already seen 74 staff die because of COVID-19. As a person who is high-risk, I don‘t feel I should have to choose between my life and my teaching career. This plan is dangerous for students and their families as well as playing with the lives of teachers. By mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA’s agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and break the trust of staff and parents.

As a middle school teacher I know that teens are often rebellious. Trying to get students to only face forward seems like a ridiculous expectation. Students at this age love to chase each other and tussle. HIDOE must as an educational policy maker should show a basic understanding of student‘s developmental stages.

That is why I am also concerned that the DOE is saying students are not required to wear masks in the classroom, despite the fact that masking inside is an expectation from the CDC.

The DOE is forcing teachers to choose their health over their jobs! 40% of our teachers are considered high risk. We are already suffering with a teacher shortage. Please don‘t exacerbate the situation and put the people of Hawai‘i at risk.

Abigail Rose
Ilima Intermediate School
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ethan Rista <ethanrista@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Department if Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am demanding that the board mandate the classrooms be configured with 6 feet between student desks in order to keep our students and staff safe.

Ethan Rista
Castle High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Traci Rosario <traci.rosario@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:06 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Teresa Rosario. I am a Renewed National Board Certified teacher and have been at Maui High School for 21 years. I am also immunocompromised as I have an autoimmune disease and my husband has COPD. My mother is currently on chemo treatment for breast cancer. There is no way in hell that I feel safe for me and my family with the ridiculous notion that our students will be three feet apart.

I love my job, my students, my colleagues, but there is no way I want to risk the lives of my family members for my job. I have already been looking at early retirement just in case I do not feel safe going back to work in the classroom. I think the superintendent's proposal is even more ludicrous in that we are opening schools at the same time we are opening our state to visitors; some of whom will have been tested and some who won't test (all flying together and probably infecting one another).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

"Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the 'health and safety of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness are the fundamental drivers to reopen schools,'" Rosenlee said. "This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness."

"On Wednesday, the University of Hawaii announced its reopening plans, which require six feet of social distancing in university classrooms and facilities."

"Why is six feet distancing required for a college freshman, but three feet is okay for a high school senior? Why is six feet required at Costco and at restaurants, but for public school teachers and students, it is only three feet? This is not okay," said our HSTA President, Corey Rosenlee and I totally agree with him.

New York City schools have already seen 74 staff die because of COVID-19.

I love my high school kiddos so much, but I refuse to sacrifice my health just to start the economy.

Please reconsider.

Take care--

Traci Rosario

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

regdamin@hawaii.rr.com <regdamin@hawaii.rr.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:09 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a first grade teacher at Pearl City Elementary School and I have been teaching for 25 years. I am deeply concerned about the 3 ft. distancing rule guideline that will be enforced this school year. This puts the students and I at risk.

Is it because the State doesn't have money to reduce the student to teacher ratio? At my school, this poses a problem because grades k-2 has the larger class sizes compared to grades 3-6. Our administration has chosen to keep class sizes smaller in upper L due to "testing". Grades K-2 has more than 20 students per class. I have 23 students assigned to my class.

The 6 feet distancing rule should be applied in the classroom, like how it is in public places. Please reconsider the guidelines you have set in schools and let's think about what's most beneficial for our keiki. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Robyn Egdamin

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Concerns to Consider... Imagine first before deciding

Iwalani Torricer <largestarfish5@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher in the Central District in Honolulu. I received information about reopening our school. I'm very concerned and strongly feel there are things that need to be considered in order to reopen. It's one thing for a school to pick a model to reopen, but it's more than picking the days students will be in person learning on campus and distance learning. There's a lot of other moving parts and it's JUST NOT SAFE OR FAIR FOR SCHOOL TO REOPEN unless you consider the following:

1. Why are teachers, staff, and students not being tested for COVID-19 before returning to school? Before greeting my students, I'd like to know that we're at least starting the year with negative COVID-19 cases instead of not knowing. Recently there was a high school student and a Summer Fun employee who tested positive for COVID-19. That is with a very limited amount of students during summer school. What will happen when all students and teachers return to campus? It's almost certain that the positive cases will continue to rise. Do you truly feel this is safe for students and teachers?

2. I was informed by my school that we will have 20 students in our class four days a week for in person learning. Which means students are going to be "assigned a bubble" for their desk space. Basically the school will be marking the floor for designated spaces. Sounds good, BUT... did you consider a 7 year old sitting at their desk from the start of the school day to the end of the school day? That is over 6 hours for students to sit in one spot. Or a kindergartener who will be attending school for the first time will be forced to sit at their desk all day. I was told by my school that it's indoor recess and lunch in the classes. Which means, my 20 7 year olds will literally be at their desk every minute of the school day. The only time they will be moving around is for bathroom breaks. Do you really think this is realistic? And when asked what about our behavioral students who cannot sit for long periods of time, no response was given and it's up to individual teachers to handle it. Again, we are left with no options, no support or resources. Is this fair to students?

3. I was also informed by my school that teachers will be supervising indoor recess daily and they are unsure about supervision for lunch in the classroom. Once again, imagine a full day with no breaks. No 15 minute break or a duty free lunch. Is that fair to teachers to not only teach all day, but to supervise students during 2 recess breaks and lunchtime? Imagine you trying to eat your snack and attending to 20 students. Imagine you trying to eat your lunch and attending to the needs of 20 students. Imagine not using the restroom from 7:50am to 2:05pm. Is that fair to teachers?

4. Mask in the classroom or not? It seems there's conflicting messages on that. Imagine you sitting at your desk with 20 students in your office with no mask. Would you feel safe? I definitely will not feel safe in the classroom with students not wearing a mask. Also, I was informed that if teachers purchase masks, we would get reimbursed. Why not use that money to purchase PPE's to begin with? It's not making sense to put one more thing on a teacher's list of things to do, such as purchasing PPE's for themselves and students.

5. Dr. Kishimoto claims we can do a visual check every day. I'm sorry, there's not enough training you can provide me so I can feel comfortable to give visual checks to see if my students may or may not have COVID-19. As a teacher I should not be responsible to do the visual checks everyday. What if I make a mistake during the visual check and a student does have COVID-19 and I did not send them for a second check? Or what if I do send them for a second check and a parent gets upset because their child ended up not having COVID-19? Again, all this will backfire on the teachers. Is that fair? There needs to be a statewide procedure for checking students everyday and it should not be the responsibility of teachers to do that. It should not be left up to principals either because principals will just put it back on teachers to do. And has there been any thought to how long these visual checks will be each morning? That means taking away instructional time from my students.

6. I am not confident that 3 ft is enough space to be safe. It is just not practical or safe. Three feet apart will not be enough space to keep my students safe from each other. It has to be 6 ft apart. How do you justify allowing desks to be 3 ft apart, but you won't stand in line at the store no less than 6 ft. with everyone facing forward?

7. I do not feel comfortable with the cleaning schedule at my school. My students will be on campus four days a week, yet deep cleaning is once a week. So basically trash cans will be emptied out daily, but what about wiping down the sink area and student desks? I was also told by my school that I have to wipe down the laptops on days that students will be

using it. Well students will be using it four days a week, so now I have to add cleaning laptops to my to do list. Is this fair to teachers to be asked to do the cleaning?

9. As of today my school does not have a plan to enforce social distancing before school. Students will have marked spaces outside of our classroom, but who's going to enforce that?

I really love teaching and miss my students. Last week I mailed them summer letters hoping they are doing well and continuing to read and practice their math facts. I would love for school to reopen. I'd rather be teaching in person, BUT ONLY IF IT IS SAFE! Right now, I truly feel it is unsafe to return to school with the set up that is planned. Every model option exposes teachers and students to the virus and it scares me that you are okay with exposing us. I feel until these concerns of mine are addressed, I will not feel comfortable being in the classroom. In all my years, I would never consider a change in profession. But if I'm forced to return to the classroom, I am strongly considering looking for a career change. I think it would make more sense to have all schools implement distance learning until it is safe to return. The language that is used in the MOU doesn't make me feel safe to return to school at all. I feel it's just fancy wording to say you're making an attempt to social distance in schools.

I hope you take my concerns seriously and actually play out a day for a kindergartener or a first grader. I want you to try and spend an entire work day without any breaks for bathroom break. Then consider a teacher with 20 students who need so to figure out how to keep themselves safe from the virus and provide students with the attention needed. It's impossible!

Sincerely,
A Concerned Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michelle <mishalo85@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:23 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A) for Presentation on DOE's Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 School year. My name is Michelle Yamamoto I work at Mililani Ike Elementary-Grade 3 as a teacher. I have a son that will be a freshmen at Moanalua High School. THE CDC recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible to reduce risk. Allowing 3 feet distancing in a classroom is not acceptable. The cases in Hawaii/Oahu are still rising daily. Please take this testimony seriously. My son has been socially distancing since March. He already lost the fourth quarter of his 8th grade year. Summer he has adjust to online health and pe classes through the high school. For now this would suffice instead of going back to school then transitioning back into full distance learning mode.

Michelle Yamamoto

Parent/Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Anjelica Ayers <aiayers@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:50 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My name is Anjelica Ayers and I am a 4th grade teacher at Queen Ka`ahumanu Elementary School. If the CDC recommends that all persons, including students and teachers, be spaced 6ft apart, then it is incredibly unethical and highly irresponsible that the state of Hawaii would allow and push for 3ft spacing. Moreover, The MOU between the state and the teacher's union agreed upon 6ft spacing. Why then is the superintendent and HIDOE allowing 3ft spacing. These actions are a clear violation of the MOU. Teachers' and students' lives should not be at risk. I am asking the BOE to demand 6ft spacing in schools.

Thank you,

Anjelica Ayers

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

J <jocelynolivas@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:52 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I am a bit alarmed in recently learning that you will be asking teachers to situate students in 3ft configurations in the classrooms when the CDC advises to stay a minimum of 6ft apart. Without adequate spacing between a students, teachers & staff you are not in congruence with the infection control standards & preventative measures advised & put forth to protect the public, especially our children. I have three children within the public school system & am asking for you to put the safety & well-being of our precious children & valued staff as the first priority before returning. The timing of the school year & the decisions you are making now in preparation for it, will directly affect the severity of the second wave of the COVID19.

I am a nurse, a frontline worker & essential employee in civil service, a mother of four children, humbly asking for you to take heed & keep our children protected.

Sincerely,
Jocelyn J. Olivas

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Hazel Aningat <haningat@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 4:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Hazel Rico.
I am a parent of an incoming 3rd grader and 4th grader at Pōmaikaʻi Elementary and I also teach Kindergarten there. I wholeheartedly believe, especially for Kindergarteners, that face-to-face instruction is the most effective means of instruction. I am a big advocate for peer learning, as evident in my teaching strategies, classroom environment with flexible seating, and differentiated station work.

I am testifying on the discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I strongly do NOT feel face-to-face instruction with 3ft distancing is safe for students, teachers, and staff. If the model A is implemented at Pōmaikaʻi, with 3 ft distancing procedures, my husband and I will be considering homeschooling our children, and if we are able to entertain other financial plans, I will be resigning from my teaching position.

My family and I appreciate all your efforts, as we sail uncharted waters together. Please take our concerns into consideration.

Mahalo,
Hazel Rico and family

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jo Ann Kimura <joannkimura@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 5:12 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Sirs,

I am a 54 year old teacher with 31 years of service. I am asking that the 6’ X 6’ space between desks be mandated as is recommended with social distancing in our community. I believe that the CDC guidelines of spacing between people must be enforced in the classroom to ensure the health and safety of everyone. The school community (students, families, staff and teachers) need you to look out for our welfare. Our lives depend on it!

JoAnn Kimura
Honowai Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet between the keiki

Alison Sakamoto <sakamotoalison1@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 5:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am demanding that the board mandate six feet between student desks. “Why is six feet required at Costco and at restaurants, but for public school teachers and students, it is only three feet? This is not okay,”

“The same rules that apply to the public should be followed in our schools.”

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Carol Kawano <ckawano@hawaiiantel.net> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 5:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying about discussion item VI(A)
Regarding the DOE presentation on the reopening of school for 2020-2021.
As a first grade teacher, I do not feel it is in the best interest of the students safety for students to be allowed to sit 3 feet apart when we are asked to stay 6 feet apart in stores and other areas. There needs to be consistency for everyone, including students and adults as well. Please mandate that the spacing for student desks to be configured to at least 6 feet apart for everyone's safety.
Thank you,
Carol Kawano
Grade 1 teacher
Hickam Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Christine Bush <christine.bush@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 5:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Sir or Madam.
I am writing to you regarding the following:

Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

I am a public intermediate school teacher. I oppose the BOE's and the DOE's recommendation that 3-foot social distancing in our schools is sufficient to reduce the spread of Covid-19. This is not acceptable. The CDC's and the nation's top medical experts strongly maintain that a 6-foot separation is needed for effective social distancing.

Please mandate that all schools observe a 6-foot social distancing for everyone's safety.

Sincerely,
Christine Bush
Waipahu Intermediate School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

JOY Nakayama <joy.nakayama@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 6:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Joy Nakayama
Mililani Uka Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

July 5, 2020

Dear Board of Directors:

I am teacher and am writing again to express my concerns about the opening of schools and ask that you ensure all our safety but making sure that CDC and WHO recommendations are in place in the schools. I have seen the Hawaii Department of Health guidelines for opening schools and they are in direct conflict with the CDC guidelines, specifically with regard to social distancing and mask wearing. Below I have copied directly from the CDC site some of their guidelines with regard to opening schools. They also list risk levels for different school settings.

There are some issues to note about Hawaii's strategies for opening schools. The HSTA requested that we keep students and staff 6 feet apart in line with CDC guidelines when inside a classroom, but the superintendent then stated publicly that 3 feet is fine according the Hawaii DOH. But that goes against CDC and WHO guidelines. I think we need to follow the guidance of the experts in the field rather than caving into not following guidelines because it's a difficult thing to do. If we aren't ready to follow ALL the guidelines with fidelity, then why are we risking opening schools and setting it up to fail?

The CDC also recommends that everyone wear face coverings when inside, yet our DOH has the kids wearing masks when outside and not when inside the classroom. This is so ridiculous since all the information is states to wear masks inside and that outside there is less risk when keeping at least 6 feet apart. So, with only 3 feet apart and no masks being worn in the classroom that is a recipe for spreading the virus. It just takes one child who is carrying it to spread it to most of the class. Just look at a recent incident of 9 Hawaiian Airlines employees testing positive after being at a training. That is a good indicator of what it will be like in a classroom if one student shows up carrying the virus unknowingly. I know it is uncomfortable wearing a mask, and it is hot in our schools but just throwing caution to the wind because it's annoying is not wise. The students are required to wear a mask on the bus but not in the classroom? That is a double standard and unfair to the staff that have to work in those conditions. If it isn't feasible for students to be spaced 6 feet apart, then wearing a mask is all the more important to keep from spreading the virus. I don't know why wearing a mask has become such a bone of contention in our country, but I do see that children in other countries are wearing masks in school. The CDC even states that there is still risk even with just keeping one group of students all day with the same teacher and we aren't even doing that. The DOE is setting us up for the risk of an outbreak because they are not requiring masks to be worn inside, and having desks only 3 feet apart rather than the recommended 6 feet, and in secondary schools the students are not staying as a group with the same teacher and not mixing with other students. The students in secondary schools will be going to a different class each period with a different set of students which will also make tracing difficult if there is an outbreak.

With the recent spike in cases on the mainland, it appears the virus is raging with over 50,000 new cases being reported each day this past week. When the state allows travel to Hawaii with no quarantine, I am sure we will see a spike here as well. Already just this past week in Hawaii we have seen more than 25 cases each day for the past four days. This will likely jump higher when travel to Hawaii doesn't require quarantining for two weeks. We need to take this

seriously and do everything we can to minimize risk, and that means doing what the CDC recommends, not what the superintendent wants or the DOH says is fine.

There is much still to be done. We need an extensive information campaign in Hawaii for students, parents and staff on how to protect ourselves and each other. We need time to train the students and parents on precautions to take. I think we are rushing into opening the schools without being completely prepared, and that is dangerous. We must make sure that masks are to be worn inside, that we keep the 6 foot distance between people, and we really need to look at how we are handling secondary school settings. Having kids move between classes and mixing with other groups of kids is clearly not something the CDC thinks is a good idea. I'm not sure why we feel we need to rush into opening schools before we are sure we can do it safely. I mean the pandemic is raging in our country! We closed down because of the pandemic and here we are saying its ok to open schools when the pandemic is even worse than it was when we shut down the schools. This line of thinking does not make sense. Can't we just take a minute to figure this out? If it takes until September or the first quarter, then at least we can do distance learning until we are able to do everything correctly and safely. Do we have enough custodians to clean the schools? I know we don't. We are always short staffed, so will there be money to hire extra people to help with sanitizing the school? If teachers are expected to put themselves at risk for contracting a virus that could lead to long term heart and lung problems or even death, will they get hazard pay? Especially if you are asking them to be in a classroom and not follow the CDC guidelines for social distancing and mask wearing.

I ask that we consider holding off on in person classes until we can make sure ALL the recommendations can be followed to reduce risk. We need to make sure the schools can be cleaned regularly and that CDC guidelines are followed inside the classroom. As it is now, we are setting ourselves up for failure. The language in our agreement is weak. It uses words like, "should" and "whenever possible", which leaves it open for interpretation. I had a meeting with my administrators last week and when I asked about masks and 6 feet spacing, they said the way they are reading the agreement is that is says masks "should" be worn, but doesn't say it's mandatory so they aren't going to require students wear them in class. When I asked about the 6 feet distancing my administrator said, "It says whenever possible, and it's not possible." So, if it isn't possible then why would we open and put everyone at risk? Our country is in crisis and the way we are going about opening schools is illogical and will lead to more disruption later. Let's get it right the first time. Perhaps we do distance learning until we can ensure all safety measures can be implemented or until we are sure the cases are not rising in our state. But what is even more frightening is that administrators are being told by the superintendent that they can interpret the agreement as they see fit. They have been told they don't have to require masks or the 6 feet distancing.

Please take some time to read the CDC guidelines for opening schools. I've copied just a few recommendations here, but there is much more that needs to be done. Please help us ensure the safety of all employees and students by requiring the DOE follow the guidelines with fidelity. I fear we will be unable to cover all the classes if teachers take sick leave to avoid putting themselves at risk. We never have enough substitutes to cover during a regular school year, so what makes anyone think we won't see a problem with coverage during a pandemic? Honestly, I feel like this is going to be a disaster. It will be embarrassing when we open and have to shut

again because we weren't able to keep everyone safe. It's better to slow down and get it right. Teachers want to be back in school. No one wants to be in this awful situation, but we must do this right and safely.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

- **Lowest Risk:** Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
- **More Risk:** Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- **Highest Risk:** Full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.
- **Modified Layouts**
    - Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
    - Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
    - Create distance between children on school buses (g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) when possible.
- **Identifying Small Groups and Keeping Them Together (Cohorting)**
    - Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children).
    - Limit mixing between groups if possible.

Cloth Face Coverings

- Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings. Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are **most** essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
    - Note: Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:
        - Children younger than 2 years old
        - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
        - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin O'Hara

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

7/9/2020 Testimony

Victoria Zupancic <victoriazupancic2386@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 6:20 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Victoria Zupancic, and I am a Mathematics teacher at Lahainaluna High School. I am writing in response to the Department of Education's announcement that schools could reopen with students no more than 3 feet apart.

I would first like to state that this violates the Memorandum of Understanding between the DOE and the Hawaii State Teachers Association. This was signed into the memorandum in order to ensure that schools did whatever they can to protect the safety and health of students, teachers, and families.

Any teacher knows that even with the 6 foot distance between students, separation at all times will be difficult to maintain. By reducing that space to 3 feet, the DOE is making it more difficult for teachers to keep our Keiki safe. This will likely also increase the number of students assigned to each classroom, increasing the risk of exposure to more students, teachers, and families. I have concerns about my ability to monitor all student behavior to ensure safe distances, and I teach at the high school level. I cannot imagine the concern going through the minds of my colleagues who teach elementary.

There are a host of issues that I have with the current re-opening plan, including the use of the word should when referring to wearing masks. I could go on for days about all of the issues I have; the concern of this letter relates to the fact that the DOE has already violated the MOU in their first press conference after it was signed. If they are willing to publicly state that they are OK in reducing the amount of space between students, I do not want to see what other protections they are willing to sacrifice on behalf of the students, the teachers, and the families of Hawai'i.

I write this letter as a teacher who is considered in the high-risk category. I have Multiple Sclerosis, and I take an immuno modulating drug. I have no idea what this virus might do to me if I were to contract it; I do not want to find out. This scenario has made me seriously question whether or not I would be willing to teach in Hawai'i, and I am in my ninth year with the DOE. Luckily, I am on a sabbatical leave for the coming year. However, if there is no progress with the COVID situation in the year after, I might not be able to come back to the classroom. And I know many teachers are currently having this discussion with their families.

I implore you to consider the safety and well-being of the students, the teachers, and the families of Hawai'i. The DOE has put our administrators, staff, and teachers in a horrible position to re-open the schools without the support they need; our school has seen a custodial position cut from our budget. How can we ensure that we can keep our campus truly safe for our students, our teachers, and our families? I have worked for the department for nine years, and I understand how many times we have picked up the slack for things the DOE cannot afford and cannot provide.

Enough is enough. This is not policy and it's not budget; we are not in a scenario in which the burden Will be placed on the backs of teachers and students. You need to ensure our safety.

I implore you to hold the DOE responsible and accountable for the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and families.

Mahalo for your time.

Victoria Zupancic

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

christi barrow <schoolbarrow@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a veteran teacher, I can provide excellent learning opportunities for keiki, virtually or face to face. **However, if the minimum distance of 6 feet cannot be enforced, I will have to retire.** I have already made an appointment with my doctor to ask about accommodations I may be eligible for and her recommendations for returning to the classroom during the COVID pandemic.

I have an advanced license, Masters in Education Technology in the schools, and Certification in Online instruction. We've got a long way to go in redesigning the education system to meet the needs of the new environment. **We need to find ways to work around social distancing restrictions rather than relaxing them.**

We have seen what has happened in Florida, Texas, Arizona. **We do not want poor policy to bring the full force of the pandemic to our state and our community.**

I urge you to enforce social distancing recommendations as well as following any needs analysis for a new educational system.

Mahalo,
Christi Barrow

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testifying on Discussion Item VI(A)

BRANDI TULANG MAHUNA <bmahuna@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

On behalf of myself and the rest of the HSTA teachers, I am testifying against Item VI(A). This item puts myself at risk as well as my students in the classroom, but most of all my children especially my infant and my kupuna whom are the caregiver of my child when at work. This was not agreed upon in the first place and should not be put into place. There have been a spike in COVID cases and most recently a cluster of positive cases at a summer fun in Oahu. More research needs to be done before making a decision. Teachers are already underpaid as is, and to out them at risk will drive more teachers to change profession and or move out of state.

Sincerely,
Brandi Tulang Mahuna

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Discussion Item VI(A) DOE plan for 2020-2021 School Year

Paulette U <pauletteujimori@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education:

My name is Paulette Ujimori and I am a parent of 3 children that attend Public schools in the Pearl City (Manana Elementary (Grades 4 and 6) and Pearl City High School (Grade 9)) area. I w like to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. It is my understanding that School superintendent has stated that schools may be allowed to space children out less than 6 feet apart, as little as 3 feet apart-and will not make wearing a mask a requirement. .This is extremely concerning-a the centers for disease control have repeatedly advocated for social distancing at a distance of 6 feet. In the past, my children have gotten the flu as part of flu outbre despite getting the flu shot, most recently in January 2020 at Highlands Intermediate School and in Nov 2019 at Manana Elementary. Both required my child to be pulled out of school for 2-3 days--WITH Tamiflu and required me to take time off of work to care for them. COVID-19 has no known treatment and no vaccine?--what will happen if we have a breakout similar to recent fl outbreaks--what's the plan? Are all of this kids and teachers in the class going to have to be tested? Quarantined? Are we shutting down again and them my kids will learn minimally as they in 4th Qtr?! To me the best way to minimize any kind of school outbreak and maximize learning is to adhere to CDC guidelines of 6 feet with a mask. What are the implications if we DON'T adhere to 6 feet of separation?

My understanding is that 3 feet is "okay" if students are facing forward. I think to expect children to face forward for the duration of the school day is completely unrealistic. Please do not allo only 3 feet of separation and do NOT allow kids, parents, teachers and staff to go to school without a mask unless there is a medical condition that disallows use of a mask.

If there are any questions on this testimony, I can be reached at (808)781-1187.

Paulette Ujimori

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

christy ferreira <noheakaolulo@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to ask the BOE members to consider virtual learning for families. That is the safest way to protect our keiki and all of the staff.

If this cannot be done, I urge that you follow the same guidelines that we do in public which is 6 ft distancing.

Please protect our children.

Christy Kaolulo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A)

Tom Kowalick <phishypt@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:44 PM

My name is Tom Kowalick and I am writing in testimony on discussion item VI(A) and my support of mandating 6 foot social distancing rules in classrooms.. My wife has been an elementary school teacher for the last 14 years. The combination of improper social distancing and the lack of required mask wearing is at best, irresponsible. Asking students to sit facing forward for long periods of time is ridiculous. Anyone who knows anything about children knows that this is not the way things work.

Mandating 6 feet will ensure the health and safety of our entire community and allow families and teachers to return to school feeling safe. As a healthcare worker myself, I am concerned that my wife will be more at risk for exposure in these unsafe conditions. If my wife is exposed, then I too would need to quarantine and risk additional loss of income as well as my health. This same thing goes for each and every student, teacher and staff member and their families as well.

We are in the middle of a global health crisis. We should NOT be doing business as usual. We should be putting the health and safety of our teachers and community first, not last. Moreover, with over 1000 teacher shortage, you will see that number increase significantly if you do not take the proper actions to do the right thing. Please, mandate proper social distancing in school and require mask usage in classrooms.

Sincerely,

Concerned community member and spouse of a teacher, Thomas Kowalick

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Moani Perreira <moaniperreira078@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 7:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

RE: Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

Aloha,

I URGE YOU TO ENFORCE A 6 FEET DISTANCING POLICY IN SCHOOLS INCLUDING THE CLASSROOM AND CAFETERIA.

Teachers, students and staff, and their families are important too.

The rule in public is 6 feet to keep everyone safe. How can we keep ourselves safe in just 3 feet?

I am a grandmother of a soon to be Kindergartener. I also have friends who work in the DOE and family friends with keiki in the schools.

Our people are our greatest asset in Hawaii. We need to keep them safe. As the cases increase daily, putting hundreds of people (thousands on high school campuses) on a campus is not wise.

I urge you to protect our 'āina. Protect our people. Thank you for taking care of our teachers and our children.

Aloha and Blessings,
Moani Perreira

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet is not safe

manifestaloha@yahoo.com <manifestaloha@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

I am a public school teacher anticipating the re-opening of the schools at the end of this month. From what I understand, the DOE is advocating only 3 foot distances between students in the classroom. This is a dangerous precedent in tis time of the pandemic. The CDC recommends at least 6 foot distance between people as a safe distance for social distancing. I urge the BOE to mandate a minimum of 6 foot distancing between students when schools start up again. Safety first!

Mahalo
Katherine Roseguo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shana <emailforshana@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Shana Bartolome, I am the school counselor at E.B deSilva Elementary. My children attend E.B deSilva Elementary, Waiakea High School , and Hilo High School.

As a parent and educator I am very concerned about the safety of all whom I work with and the students that I serve. I also care much deeply for my Children and family members who have compromised immune systems.

Please if we are to return to work and students to attend school face to face , we must adhere to the CDC guidelines and have all students, faculty and staff social distance to the best of ability and wear masks. This is a must to keep us all safe and prevent the spread of this deadly novel Covid-19 virus.

Mahalo,
Shana Bartolome

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Patrick Ehrenlechner <patehren@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Patrick Ehrenlechner and I am a parent of two children who attend E.B deSilva Elementary, and Hilo High School.

As a parent I am very concerned about the safety of all in our community. I care much deeply for my Children and family members who have compromised immune systems.

Please if students are to attend school face to face , we must adhere to the CDC guidelines and have all students, faculty and staff social distance to the best of ability and wear masks. This is a must to keep us all safe and prevent the spread of this deadly novel Covid-19 virus.

Aloha,
Patrick Ehrenlechner

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Yasuko Lawrenz <yasukolawrenz@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. My name is Yasuko Lawrenz. I am a mother of an elementary school student and a teacher in Hilo. I am writing to ask that DOE respect the 6 feet distance guidelines for school reopening. 6 feet is the minimum. Distance learning is safer for everyone's health.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ryan Kagami <rskagami@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a District resource teacher and work closely with the administrators, teachers, and faculties at our Windward district schools. I cannot believe the plan to reopen is only looking at 3' spacing and it's what you would consider as safe and protecting our workforce/kids. I am in close contact with at least 2 older relatives who are at high risk..and I need to see them at least once a week. Putting kids and teachers into this unsafe situation puts us all at risk and is extremely careless. I would hate to know that we tried hard to voice our concern, only to reopen in an unsafe way and be responsible for cases or outbreaks in our schools.

I appreciate the opportunity to share concerns. I would also encourage you to see the validity in teachers' request as working with kids is a very high-energy, fast-paced environment where keeping a distance or getting kids to consistently be aware of preventing spread is a big challenge.

Ryan Kagami

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jackie Mathias <keaki4422@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
I am testifying on discussion item VI(A). I am a parent of an ingoing 8th grader at Iao School on the island of Maui. I also have a 4 year old that should be entering preschool soon at Maui Adventist Church. My family and I take all the precautions we can with COVID-19. I am an associate at a big box retailer and take 6ft social distancing very seriously to keep my family safe. I believe by doing that as a family we are being as cautious as possible. Hearing that Hawaii schools are thinking about having just a 3ft distance in the classrooms are very upsetting to my family. How can our government and state officials ask us as adults to do our part in social distancing with 6ft apart and have the same people have our children in greater risks by having the just 3ft apart. Numerous footage distance testing have been made and it is known to have a lesser chance of bacteria spreading with 6ft apart. Having our children just 3ft apart not only puts our children and childrens family at greater risks but also the school staff and their families. I am hoping that we can all find a common ground solution that will work for all to continue our childrens education in the safest way possible with all precautions taken.

Mahalo
Jaclyn Mathias

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social Distancing As Schools Reopen

Lynne Decosmo <calpeach99@gmail.com>
Reply-To: calpeach99@gmail.com
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:42 PM

Aloha,
Please reconsider your guideline which would require students only needing 3' of space between them as the BOE contemplates the safest ways of reopening schools.

The CDC recommends at least 6' of space between people.
The WHO recommends at least 6' of space between people.
Dr. Anthony Fauci recommends at least 6' of space between people.
Costco and most stores I have been in recommend 6'of space between customers.
Why would that now be any different for school children, teachers, and staff?

As a former teacher of 40 years, and now a substitute teacher the past 4 years, I am well aware of how difficult it is to keep students apart in the best of times.
That is why we must create guidelines that keep everyone at schools as safe as possible.

Again, I am strongly suggesting that you please reconsider your 3' of space between students at school and require them to maintain at least 6' from each other.

Mahalo nui loa for your kokua!
Lynne Decosmo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Jodi Kunimitsu <jodikunimitsu@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 8:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a 17-year veteran teacher of the DOE. I teach math at Maui High School, in Kahului. I am writing to you with serious concerns regarding the Department of Education’s School Reopening Plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

According to recent announcements, the DOE has said it is okay for schools to reopen with students seated no less than 3 feet apart, instead of the original 6 feet apart originally agreed to. In addition, there is NO REQUIREMENT for students to wear facial masks, while there is a requirement for teachers to wear facial masks. We all know that the purpose of masks is to protect the other people around you, not necessarily yourself. So are we to assume that teachers are expected to protect students from getting COVID-19, but students have no obligation to protect teachers from COVID-19?

It is very frustrating as a teacher to once again be put in a position where we are expected to make so many sacrifices for everyone else, while ignoring our own concerns about our health, safety, and that of our families. Parents are complaining that they need someone to watch their kids so that they can go to work. The DOE is insisting that we rush to getting back to as normal a learning environment as possible. Believe me, we all want that too, BUT (and this is a huge BUT) why are school personnel (teachers, admin, office staff, EAs, PTTs, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, security staff, etc.) all expected to put ourselves at risk for the sake of everyone else? Are we that expendable?? I can’t imagine there is a line of substitutes ready to step in should one of us get sick. What is going to happen to the schools then? Why are we risking it and then going to deal with it, if it happens, instead of preventing it. We need to stop taking a reactive approach and be proactive - prevent the spread!!!

Students may lose learning during this pandemic, but learning can be recovered. If we lose lives in our community due to COVID-19, those cannot be recovered. The argument that students are not as affected by COVID-19 as older adults is not a valid reason to open schools prematurely. There are many school personnel who can be affected by this virus as well as students who live in homes with older family members. Again, are we saying their lives don’t matter?

How many of you are willing to come into my classroom and sit there all year with me, with my students rotating through - 3 feet away from them, without them wearing a mask? If you are not willing to do that and if none of the other DOE personnel at the administrative level, who don’t work with students daily, are not willing to do that, then why are you expecting us to do it?

These are the things I would like to see before we are expected to teach students face to face in our classrooms: minimum 6 feet distancing between EVERY PERSON in the classroom and mandatory mask or face shield use by EVERYONE in the classroom, in addition to the other protections agreed to in the MOU between the BOE/DOE and HSTA. If this cannot be achieved, we should have the option of offering full distance learning to our students until there are no more active cases in the state and/or a vaccine is available.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify. Please do what is right, not only for our keiki, but all the school personnel that keep our schools running.

Mahalo,
Jodi Kunimitsu
Kihei, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jasmine Calpito <calpito74@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My children can’t afford to come home with COVID due to the fact that I have family members with health issues at high risk during this time. My children understand what is going on and they don’t think it is safe for them to be 3ft apart in class, they feel much safer to be 6ft apart.

Me as a parent don’t think it it safe to start school while we are opening up our community to tourists. I also don’t think it’s safe for our children to be 3ft apart in class. If we need to be 6ft apart within the community, our keiki should be 6ft apart at school whenever possible. Our children should be afforded the same safety measures as us adults.

Our keiki is our future.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rikki Newton <oceanspiritmassage77@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:
My Daughter attends Kahuku School and will be going into the 8th grade.
I highly oppose the school session commencing due to the unsafe conditions due to the pandemic.
If school does reopen I feel they have to somehow require 6 feet social distancing.
How this will be possible, I don't know??
And as far as masks go??
My Daughter remarked, "How will the students remember to wear a mask when they can't even remember to bring a pencil!"
I feel as a Parent we need to know our kids will be safe!
Thank you
Rikki Newton

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

huakai007@aol.com <huakai007@aol.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:03 PM
Reply-To: huakai007@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Jillian Perreira. I have two children. One attends Waiakeawaena Elementary School and my other child attends Waiakea Intermediate School.

Thank you.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Theodore Banta <theodore.banta@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am Theodore Banta, Pahoa High and Intermediate School. Teach 7-10 grade Science.

- As a teacher, I spend a lot of time with students and cannot risk bringing home the virus to my wife who works at the university.
- As teacher with compromised immune system due to having walking pneumonia a few years ago.
- As a teacher caring for high-risk kupuna is a major concern for me.

Please do not reduce the distancing to 3 feet which would increase the transmission rate - follow the rules set out by the CDC!

Mahalo,

Ted Banta

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Matthew Suzuki <msuzukirvca@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Matthew Suzuki my children attend Kailua High School and Maunawili Elemantary my wife also works at Aliamanu.

I’m writing this email/testimony/plea because the proposed plan is ridiculous and unsafe to both the keiki and staff, it’s too rushed back and not enough precautions and safe guards. 3 feet is unacceptable for social distancing and face coverings need to be required for all I’m calling on you to change these protocols and do the right thing.

Kind regards,
Matthew Suzuki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY-- Teacher with 2 SPED students that are HIGH RISK

Darlene Dunston <dbd391@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

RE: Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Darlene Dunston: Teacher at James Campbell High School
I also have 2 grandchildren who attend James Campbell High School. They are both SPED students with Autism.

I, Darlene Dunston, am a high risk individual.
As a teacher for 9th grade students I know all to well that my students cannot sit still at all.
Our classes are 80-90 minutes long. There is no way they will not turn and talk with other students are stay facing forward for very long.

Even 6 ft is worrisome for me, but I believe that our scientist have done an awesome of tracing the safety of 6 ft.

Also, we will not be able to run our air conditioners and we have data that states our classrooms in Ewa Beach can get as hot as 90+ degrees. Students will be even more restless in their seats.

PLEASE MAKE THE MINIMUM CONFIGURATION 6FT OR MORE.
Mahalo
Ms. Darlene Dunston

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

melissa.skadan@hotmail.com <melissa.skadan@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a 2nd grade teacher at Na Wai Ola Public Charter School in Mountain View.

As a teacher and mother of a 1 yr old and 4 yr old, I am very concerned with the decision to relax mask wearing and physical distancing. We should be following the CDC guidelines. This seems like a decision that should be made after returning to school for several months with little to no COVID-19 resurgence/effects. Then maybe we decide to relax the guidelines a bit. Please think about our keiki, ohana, and Kumu. We can always relax things if everything goes well. I think that is what everyone wants, to go back to normal. But rushing into it prematurely is not smart and is not sending a good message to our community. Let's be proactive, not reactive. Let us keep Hawaii safe. Our job as educators is first and foremost the safety of our students.

Mahalo,
Kumu Melissa Skadan

testimony

dustin haru <DuStIn_HaRu@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:40 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a DOE employee, I am grateful for my job and am excited to go back to work however with the rise of covid cases I hope we can find a better solution to our safety for our kids and us teachers. my concern is that when we do go back to school our locations can become a hotspot for more cases. With this being said I would hope to see better implications of covid prevention following cdc guidelines, as 3 feet is a dangerous amount of distance between students and teachers.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft?

the KRUSH <krushhawaii@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern. I feel 3 ft is not social distancing especially teaching elementary school students. At 3 ft students easily have the capability to reach side, front & students behind. Even attending church today 6 ft was followed for the health reasons and social distancing. I would like to safely continue teaching. However because I am at high risk 65 yrs old I am concerned getting ill and contracting COVID-19. This virus is extremely dangers for us elders. Thank you for your time. Edwin Ramones.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Austin <austin.m.yamamoto@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 9:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I would like to testify on Discussion Item VI(A). I don't have a testimony as much as I have questions. I feel I do not know all the facts. I do not know:

1. Why is 3 feet is being okayed instead of 6 like the rest of the public is encouraged to follow? This 6 feet distance is even more important since they are inside. At least this is what is being said by the governor, mayor, CDC, and medical professionals. There must be a reason the State is trying for 3 instead of 6. Could you explain? I have multiple assumptions but I don't want to assume. I do know there are multiple factors that determined the states decision for 3 feet and I believe all the facts should be opened to the public so they may see the facts and reasoning behind the decision. Transparency!

2. Why did the State decide the children do not need to wear masks? I seen the social cues of facial expressions and what not but is that the only real reason? What about face shields?

3. What will happen if a student Or educator gets sick and dies? I'm assuming the state understands a lawsuit will happen. How much is the estimated attorney cost and civil loss expected to be? Would the State have a better option to buy laptops and provide laptops to all children without computers so they could tele teach? Hawaii is supposedly trying to be more tech savvy.

4. Is it feasible to have classes taught outside the classroom where social distancing would be greater? At a park/playground or movie drive in style being taught on a big screen?

5. It is said that 33% of what a child knows is taught at school and the remaining is learned at home and through experiences. I heard the participation rate of children during the stay at home order was pretty dismal. I assume the majority of the kids who didn't participate are low income or on some other social program. Is it constitutional to have social benefit withheld if a child does not participate? Can laws be enacted?

As of right now I am against the States plan until I'm able to get clear, comprehensive, straight forward answers and facts. I feel there is too much at stake. I understand many school children do not get deathly I'll from this and more die from the flu every year.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6ft distancing, masks, temperature checks

Heather Ramiro <hegramiro@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE I implore you to be mindful and responsible! Follow the heath guidelines that all public places are following right now which is 6ft distancing, wearing of masks, and temperature checks.
I am a 3rd grade teacher and mother of a 1st, 3rd, and 5th grader. I want to be in the classroom and I want my children back in the classroom learning with their teachers and peers, but I want it to happen safely.
Universities, gyms, dance studios, etc are following the health guidelines of 6ft distancing and wearing of masks (many are also implementing temperature checks) to ensure the safety of staff and students/patrons.
Our public schools need to be following these same guidelines and BOE needs to step up and be responsible with their choices and guidelines for our schools and communities.
With the state opening up tourism August 1st and schools set starting date as August 4th, it is even more crucial for BOE to be diligent and responsible with the health and safety of your teachers, students, staff, and the communities in which the schools and BOE serve.

Heather Ramiro
Concerned teacher & parent

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Students should be placed 6 feet apart!

C Shimoda <cshimoda808@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:07 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Students should be placed 6 feet apart at schools. If all other entities are required to social distance 6 feet apart why not schools? I am an educator and am fearful of getting sick. I'm worried that we will be a breeding ground for COVID with students placed so closely together. Please keep the health and safety of everyone in mind. I know we all want to catch students up and make sure they're learning but not at the cost of getting sick and potentially dying.

Crystal Shimoda
Helemano Elementary School

This testimony is for the General Board Meeting to be held on July 9, 2020 regarding agenda item VII. E. Board Action on MOU between State of Hawaii BOE and HSTA for 2017-2020 COVID-19 contract modifications and conditions of work

July 5, 2020

Dear Hawaii Board of Education Members,

My name is Marilou Bulagay. I am writing to you as a parent and as an educator. I am a 2nd grade teacher at a DOE public school. I also have a daughter who will be a junior attending a public high school.

I am in OPPOSE to the guidelines allowing for 3 feet distancing or anything less than 6 feet of distance when students are all facing one direction in closed quarters. I would like the 6 feet distancing to be mandated as part of the contractual working conditions to ensure the safety of all stakeholders- students, teachers, staff and community.

As a teacher of lower elementary students, they are not yet mindful of distances. At a young age, they like to gather and be with friends and other students and even when sitting at their desk 3 feet away from each other, will turn to either side of themselves and talk to their neighbor. In this situation, the students are now facing each other and according to CDC guidelines a 6 feet distance is recommended when facing each other to prevent the spread of COVID.

At any age, school aged or high schooler, they will need to get out of their seats to get things from their school bags which hangs from the back of their desk bringing them less than 3 feet of separation from the student behind them allowing for a greater chance for the virus to spread. All guidelines from the CDC highly recommends 6 feet distancing. With 6 feet distancing, this space between each child will be greater preventing the spread of the COVID virus.

The effects of COVID on a child can be very dangerous as we have seen on the news. It may cause multi-symptom inflammatory syndrome. This illness can cause extended fever, abdominal pain, rash, difficulty breathing, increased heartbeat, and tiredness. These are all symptoms similar to Kawasaki disease. I have a niece who was diagnosed with Kawasaki disease. For several years, after she recovered, she continued rigorous doctor visits to ensure that the effects of the illness were not severe and not long term. This kind of situation for any parent to see their child go through is so disheartening and even more frightening for the child to experience. I do not ever wish this on anyone or anyone's child. The 6 feet distancing mandate can prevent this from any family or child from experiencing such tormenting experience!

Another reason I oppose allowing the 3 feet distancing rule, is that I work in a community where we have students from 2 housing areas and students who live in multi-generational and multi-family homes. Previously we have seen in the news that this is where clusters of the

COVID predominantly occurs. Therefore, if a child from my school gets infected, there is a great chance that new clusters can occur which only encourages community spread of the virus. Last but not least, there could be ramifications if 3 feet distancing or anything less than 6 feet of distance is allowed. I can foresee parents and other stakeholders suing the state, DOE, and BOE for not mandating a 6 feet distance in schools. A child infected from school, could take the virus home and spread it to the greater community. And this can be traced back to the school through contact tracing. During a time of pandemic, I do not think this is something that the state wants to succumb itself to. This would be such an embarrassment to Hawaii, the DOE and BOE- all because a 6 feet mandate was not in place. After all it is well known knowledge and common sense that distancing of 6 feet is good practice for all. Students, teachers and staff should not be exempt from this expectation.

Please do what is right for the students, teachers, staff, families and the communities they live in and please mandate 6 feet of social distancing in schools ensure the safety of everyone!

Sincerely,
Marilou Bulagay

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Linda Miyamoto <bakerlin4@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I URGE YOU TO ENFORCE A 6 FEET DISTANCING POLICY IN SCHOOLS INCLUDING THE CLASSROOM AND CAFETERIA.

Teachers, students, staff, and their families are important.

The rule in public is 6 feet to keep everyone safe. How can we keep ourselves safe in just 3 feet?

I am a community member with family and friends who work in the DOE. They also have children.

Our people are our greatest asset in Hawaii. We need to keep them safe. As the cases increase daily, putting hundreds of people (thousands on high school campuses) on a campus is not wise.

I urge you to protect our 'āina. Protect our people. Thank you for taking care of our teachers and our children.

Mahalo,
Linda Miyamoto

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Krystal Soraoka <krystal.soraoka@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Krystal Soraoka, a 4th grade teacher at Helemano Elem School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. I am not usually one to speak out and testify, but I feel the matters regarding the safety of myself and my students are extremely important. First off, I feel like we shouldn't be accepting 3 foot spacing as okay because we are in the middle of a pandemic. The CDC recommends 6 foot distancing to reduce the spread of Covid-19. Why would we follow this rule in all of our businesses and offices but make exceptions at school? Why should we wait for an outbreak to happen in one of our schools before correcting these guidelines? We need to act and fix it now to prevent such issues! The thought of returning to the classroom without social distancing is terrifying. I cannot risk becoming ill, as I have two very young children t (under 2) to care for. If I contracted Covid-19 because of failed safety practices in our workplace it would be devastating. There is no way I'd be able to care for my newborn son if I have to be isolated as he is solely dependent on me. Please mandate 6 foot social distancing in our classrooms because no one wants to or deserves to put their health or their families health at risk! There is no vaccine so all we can do right now to stay safe is to social distance and wear face coverings.

Thanks for your time,
Krystal Soraoka

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Testimony

Bonnie Ho <808ponoleadership@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I URGE YOU TO ENFORCE A 6 FEET DISTANCING POLICY IN SCHOOLS INCLUDING THE CLASSROOM, CAFETERIA, DROP OFF and PICK UP AREAS.

Teachers, students, staff, and their families are important.

The rule in public is 6 feet to keep everyone safe. How can we keep ourselves safe in just 3 feet?

I am a community member with family and friends who work in the DOE. They also have children.

Our people are our greatest asset in Hawaii. We need to keep them safe. As the cases increase daily, putting hundreds of people (thousands on high school campuses) on a campus is not wise.

I urge you to protect our 'āina. Protect our people. Thank you for taking care of our teachers and our children.

Mahalo,
Bonnie Ho

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

JIN CHANG <jin_chang@kapoleimid.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:25 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Jin Chang and I am a teacher at Kapolei Middle School. I wanted to testify that I am extremely worried and scared of our school's plan to open with students physically attending school on August 4. I understand that our students need in school, face to face learning. I miss them terribly and want nothing but to interact with them in person. That is why I became an educator. However, I am worried for the safety of my students, their families, my family, and the community I love and deeply care for. We are taking a huge risk by opening up our schools, we are experimenting with people's lives. Our keiki have been spared so far from Covid-19 and I believe that is because schools have been closed and students have been kept safe at home.

Our principal proposed a plan to gradually open up our crowded school with Quarter 1 offering distance learning, Quarter 2 with a hybrid blended learning, and Quarters 3 and 4 being in school instruction provided that Hawaii has flattened the curve once again. His proposal was shot down by superintendent Kishimoto. Why does the superintendent have absolute power to dictate how our school is run. We know our students, parents, and community the best and we should be given some rights as to how to run our school in this time of uncertainty. Our community is not yet ready to get back to normal.

I humbly plead with you to reconsider how schools should reopen. Allow individual schools some flexibility. Place the schools accountable when it comes to instruction but please do not gamble and experiment with our health and our lives. Thank you.

Aloha,

Jin Chang

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Dawn Kleinfelder <dawn@likolehua.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As a parent of two teenagers who attend Waiakea Intermediate and High School I am very concerned about 3 feet social distancing for students in the classrooms. Department of Health and Hawai'i County has implemented a 6 feet acceptance standard for any business or government facility to remain open to operate. You need to also participate at this level for the safety of both teachers and staff.

Mahalo for your time,
Dawn Kanealii-Kleinfelder

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Desk spacing

W Cheryl Materne <lavasista@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I believe- given CDC guidelines for public spaces - (both inside and outside) state there be a 6’ distance. It is the minimum required. You are acting with gross negligenCe- trying to circumvent the system! It shows blatant disregard for our own personal safety (and our families) as well as for the position we hold as professional educators. It also shows blatant disregard for the students and their families.
3’ distance is absolutely not acceptable
Cheryl Materne
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Back to school requirements.

Ala Lee <uluwehiala18@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:32 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I have a daughter who I would like one day to go to school. I have a number of nieces and cousins and close family/friends children that attend school. For their safety and the whole family households safety and the safety of others they may come in contact with, you should not take precautions lightly. Masks, temperatures, and social distancing should be taking highly into consideration when school starts up again. Think of the people. Think of their safety. We need to minimize the number of cases of COVID as much as possible.



Testimony

Michele <mpksasaki@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:32 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

It is with deep concern for the safety of students and staff that I testify on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. As a dedicated 21 year veteran elementary school teacher at Hickam Elementary, I, Michele Sasaki, am in disbelief at the lack of respect, care, and the disconnect between the Department of Education and classrooms.

Through the negotiations process, the HSTA had come to an agreement for reopening schools. Interestingly, it's called a "Memorandum of Understanding." Understanding . . . Yet clearly, one side MISunderstood the meaning of agreement and the specific guideline of 6 feet or two arms lengths. Somehow the 6 feet of distance shrunk to 3 feet. If that change doesn't make your eyebrows shoot up and your jaw drop down, let's add in the misguided notion of some magical bubble surrounding classroom groups and home groups. Thus, there's no need for masks to be worn. At this point, any logical person's head would be shaking from side to side. Not only is the Department turning its back on what was agreed to, the inferred message to those in school (including teachers, educational assistants, office staff, support services, custodians, cafeteria workers, other staff members AND students) is that we are ALL EXPENDABLE.

Each day we view new reports about an uptick in COVID-19 cases in our community. And yet, schools are to reopen with 3 feet spacing and no masks needed. This messaging conflicts with every other directive that has come out from the CDC and our local government. I may not be a medical professional, but as someone who can think logically, questions about safety arise when I repeatedly hear on those news reports about the importance of masks and maintaining social distance. We are continually warned by officials and ads from the Department of Health about these crucial actions in stopping the spread and saving lives, both our own lives and those of others. We go to the store, we eat out, we go anywhere, and what do we see and what are we told? "No mask, no entry." There are stickers on the ground reminding us about 6 feet distance. We stand in lines to adhere to limits to the number of entries in the effort to maintain social distance. Why are these health and safety efforts important and mandated everywhere else but not schools? One of the first strategies taught at the elementary level for problem solving and reviewing work for quality is asking oneself, "Does my answer MAKE SENSE?"

At this point in my letter, I wonder whether you are as puzzled as I am as to the differences in what is acceptable safety measures for the public and reopened businesses versus schools. If you are unmoved, then please ask yourself what will happen when a teacher, a staff member, or a student becomes sick or worse, dies? And about those magic bubbles that mysteriously exist for school and home groups . . . What happens when that bubble, or the idea of those bubbles pop? When the virus is transferred from a teacher or student to someone else in their home? What line will the Department give then to placate our worries and subsequent anger?

The decisions being made about the opening of schools during the pandemic are LIFE and DEATH decisions. In the very least, I would expect the same concern for the health and safety of the school community as that of the public- minimum of 6 feet distance AND masks/face shields.

Finally, I would ask that you "put yourself in the other person's shoes." Would you enthusiastically jump to trade places? I teach Kindergarten. It is an everyday occurrence for students to sneeze and cough for everyone to share. Students naturally gravitate to each other. They are playful and social as 5 and 6 year olds would be. Would you like to teach my

class without the proper safety measures in place? We must do what is right to protect our school staff, students, families, and community. I implore the Board to ensure that health and safety is a priority. Thank you.

Mahalo,

Michele Sasaki

Hickam Elementary Kindergarten Teacher

Honolulu, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Karla Tombrello <ktombrello@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am emailing with my concerns over Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

I believe desks need to be 6 ft apart. I understand the facilities and staffing issues this creates and the new puzzles to solve. 3ft of space seems like a challenge to me. "Can I touch my neighbor if I stretch far enough" Desks get moved closer or out of place, 3ft soon becomes 18 inches because it's difficult to pay attention to all the moving pieces of a classroom. Having an organization like the CDC suggest this requirement speaks volumes. As a secondary level classroom teacher, I know keeping students apart at any age is impossible. Teachers, parents and students need guidelines they can all understand, support, model and follow. Clear guidelines set as high up as the DOE can help create equity among schools. To be honest, I am struggling with DeVos not setting federal guidelines as a starting point for individual states, for help to districts, buildings, and classrooms.

The lack of information and ever changing information keeps me up at night. I worry about kids and teachers, families at home. I want masks in classrooms. I want school opening to be delayed until we see the effects of the tourism industry reopening. The number of people who regularly come into Hawai'i daily is scary. Even if 1% are infected, that is hundreds of people and that's before the community spread. As a parent, I want to see the learning environment under these new changes before I send my kid. I want to know about lunch, electives, library time, recess, class size and everything else I'm too stressed to remember right now.

My name is Karla Tombrello
My child attends Wheeler Elementary
I am an experienced educator (14 years) currently staying home instead of putting littles in daycare

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Iten VI (A)

Serena Nishihara <snishiha@hawaii.edu> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 10:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the Board of Education:

I am a teacher with a compromised immune system at Hilo High School and would be kind of hesitant to be in the classroom without following the recommendation of the CDC distancing of 6 feet. I think it is necessary for us to follow the recommendation of 6 feet otherwise we would be in for a lawsuit if any of the students gets covid-19 they will say that the DOE did not follow the 6 feet distancing rule and so this is initiating for parents to take a stand against the DOE for allowing a distance of 3 feet which is not recommended by the CDC. I pray that you will endorse the 6 feet distancing for our students safety as well as the teachers safety. Recommend that all students use a mask in and out of class..Mahalo and aloha, Kumu Serena

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shana Brown <shanabanana74@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:10 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Regarding: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to you because I am concerned with the DOE reopening plan in regards to some of the distancing guidelines. The DOE states, “Masks should be worn when keeping six feet apart is not possible, or when children face each other and interact in similar ways. However, if students are sitting three feet apart, and facing the same way, wearing a mask is not required.” I am confused that we would not have students wearing masks while being only 3 feet from each other in the classroom. Also, how long could we reasonably expect children to sit facing forward? Adults might struggle with that requirement and the language is confusing.

One reason I am so concerned is that the school I worked at in Chicago prior relocating here in 2014, had a student die from this virus shortly after a lockdown was put in place. He was 12 years old and such a sweet boy. It was absolutely devastating to his family, my former colleagues, his classmates, and the community.

I don’t want to see another person die or suffer from this horrible illness. That is why I feel so strongly that we need to maintain distance between students to the recommended 6 feet or at the very least require face masks when we can’t meet the required 6 feet.

Our children, their families, and our school staff are all precious. Please take into consideration the very heartbreaking story I have told when making this decision. I know this is a difficult time and I know you, like me, would rather be safer than sorry when considering the possible outcomes.

Mahalo,
Shana Brown

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Feet Distancing is Putting our lives at risk

nahikuhale2@aol.com <nahikuhale2@aol.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:23 PM
Reply-To: nahikuhale2@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To The Board of Education,

Please reconsider allowing students in class to be 3 feet apart and ignore the CDC recommendation are mandated in stores and everywhere else. This will put each and every individual at risk, and now all of our families will eventually be exposed and many will get sick. I work in the department of education and I am shocked that the BOE would even consider risking our lives and the lives of our community to make it work. This is not safe practice at all. This is not showing compassion to the workers and supporters in the system. We are not at all prepared to be in the classroom of 20+ children because of limited manpower and space. But if it's not safe yet then we will have to move into more time for virtual learning. Especially working with elementary ages, 3 feet distancing is not safe at all.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kuramata

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

fay lindsey <rebely97@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:25 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet is NOT a safe distance. If everyone else has to stay 6 feet apart, that is the rule that should be followed in school as well. Stop changing the rules to make it convenient- make them as SAFE as we can !!
Fay Lindsey. Kaumana Elem.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

John Shim <johnshim13@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:27 PM
To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I'm a member of hsta as a school teacher and wanted to strongly urge the BOE to follow cdc guidelines on maintaining 6 feet between individuals at all times in school. If the board is leaning towards 3 feet of spacing then please consider starting the next academic year with 6 feet spacing first, then base any future increase in physical attendance on campus if there are no cases of community spread due to schooling. Also, I worry forcing HIDOE employees to work in unsafe conditions could open up legal problems for the state in the future. Mahalo.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

haleamaulana@hawaii.rr.com <haleamaulana@hawaii.rr.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:32 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha.

My name is Lana Haleamau. I am a teacher at Hilo Union School on Hawai'i island. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Returning to a three-foot policy is dangerous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education. This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority.

Why is six feet distancing required at the grocery stores, banks, Home DePot, Target, and other stores but for public school teachers and students, it is only three feet? The same rules that apply to the public should be followed in our schools.

Teachers at not guinea pigs. We are human beings, just like you. We should be given the same health and safety rules as the community. No less! We shouldn't be put at risk and die while we do the jobs we love.

Also, why is Christina Kishimoto saying that face masks are not required in the classroom. Again, all CDC guidelines that the general public are required to follow should be required in public schools. We are NO different!

All schools should be expected to follow the CDC guidelines or the state should NOT reopen public schools!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Jennifer Antone <jenniferhawaii2@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Kākou!

I am submitting this testimony with regards to Discussion Item VI (a) on the DOE's reopening plans for SY 20-21. As a parent I am extremely disappointed and concerned about the DOE's proposed implementation of a 3 foot distancing guideline for students in the classroom. Guidelines set forth from the CDC clearly state a recommended distance of SIX FEET for proper social distancing to occur; yet we're purposing our children should return to a classroom where half that distance is sacrificed for the conveniency of maximizing the number of students that can fit in to a class while still pretending like social distancing is maintained?! Why should it be that in restaurants, gyms and everywhere else a six foot guideline be maintained, but that in a classroom where children are together for the better part of six hours a day, these safety measures be thrown out the window?
In addition, if the DOH is making these recommendations than why aren't these 3 feet guidelines be instituted state-wide? Why aren't our public school children being treated with the same dignity as the rest of the state? It is tragic to think that the health and safety of our youth and educators has been compromised for the lack of sound and logical solutions that respect the well-being of all.

I respectfully ask that a six foot distancing be maintained in all our classrooms and that our keiki receive the protection they deserve.

Mahalo,
Jennifer
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony VI(A)

Lilia Doubleday <liliadoubleday@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Lilia Doubleday <liliadoubleday@gmail.com>

Please accept my testimony on the DiscussionItem VI(A):

Lilia Doubleday
Parent at Kalama Intermediate School
Makawao, Maui County

Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I'm testifying today to demand that you lessen the health risks for my child to attend school during this active pandemic.

Mandate classrooms be at safest standards and set an absolute 6 feet minimum between desks.

Highest risk of students contracting COVID-19 in a school classroom setting is having desks **less than 6 feet apart, says CDC guidelines.**

Expert epidemiologists say absolute minimum is 6 feet distance apart ,which allow space for droplets to settle, so that you are not breathing them in.

The CDC has safety guidelines set at 6 feet for all public safety nation wide. The CDC is a branch of the U.S. government.

Our school community, families ,teachers, staff, and all students including my child, deserve to be kept safe in their learning environment.

We must find ways to uphold safety first, and the well being of our students and school community. NO exceptions. Nothing less than 6 feet.

Thank you for listening.

Lilia Doubleday

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michelle Quinlan <mikala25@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Michelle Uyematsu. My kids attend Mauka Lani elementary school and will be 2nd and 5th graders. I am concerned with the discussion of the presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 school year. I have been safely quarantining my family at home for the entire time and don't feel comfortable sending my kids back to school in August with the rising numbers of confirmed cases each day. It's also scary to think about others that will be sending their kids to school with mine and whether or not their family has been taking the same precautions. It's scary enough to think the risk of sending them to school even with the 6 ft distancing rule. How can you even be considering reducing that to 3 ft when 6 ft is the recommendation for everything else. I think it's too risky to lower the social distancing between kids as we all know they won't be always wearing their masks correctly, effectively covering their mouths when they sneeze or tempted to play with their neighbor as they have seen so few friends over the last several months. I won't be sending my kids to face to face schooling unless proper precautions are in place for the school year including smaller class sizes by either blending virtual and face to face learning and social distancing and sanitizing.

Michelle Uyematsu

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Safety First?!!

Michelle Fujie <mjfujie@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am almost at a loss for words because of the absurdity surrounding how BOE and DOE is handling trying to safely get our students and teachers back to school. BUT I need to voice my opinion and concerns about the 3ft vs 6ft "suggestion" and our schools proposal for face-to-face learning.

I get it AAP wrote some recommendations.. but the **Centers for Disease Control AND Prevention** states, "COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for **a prolonged period**. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that **people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19**."

Every other public space that we spend less prolonged time in than schools like the grocery stores, restaurants, post office, the list goes on and on.. requires 6ft social distancing. SO why is it now OK for students who will be in **prolonged** contact throughout a school day with each other and teachers to now have their social distancing lengths reduced as long as desks are facing forward? Is it now safer to be in closer proximity to populations in the highest "subclinical" group either asymptomatic (no symptoms) or paucisymptomatic (mild systems)?

School aged children arguably make more social contacts than adults so should be expected to have **higher** case incidences and **higher** transference levels so it was proposed that we return to face-to-face instruction where maintaining 6 ft distancing in classrooms will not always be possible but we will just equip tables and wear safety plastic guards while also wearing masks whenever possible.

But lets also consider this:
1) Students who are school age children are more likely to show no symptoms so visually screening to see if students look or have symptoms of being sick is a great way to screen.

2) School aged students are more likely to make more social contacts than adults meaning higher possible transference levels. So let‘s go back to school and let students be at 3 feet instead of 6 feet.

3) School age students are least likely to get severely sick BUT they can be carriers and can spread the virus without symptoms. So let's provide prolonged exposure to our already minimal pool of teachers.

This does not sound like the BOE or DOE is placing safety first!
Admin proposed that everyone should be back to face-to-face learning in a K-12 learning environment because it is beneficial according to AAP.

According to the MOU following guidance from the State DOH is important. Well the CDC and Hawaii Department of Health BOTH clearly state "Maintain a distance of 6+ ft, or two-arms' length, from others to prevent germs from spreading."

One reaction piece to the AAP recommendations says my thoughts best:
"Keep in mind that all of the guidelines set forth by the AAP are recommendations ONLY, and it will be up to each state and local district to formulate their own reopening strategy!!!"

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

renee fludd <renee.fludd@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:08 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am.sending this email as my formal complaint against opening schools during this time. The cases of covid 19 are on the rise still with no end or solution in sight. Why are you wanting to expose or keiki to the chance of illness ? We need tho be smarter and stop putting our babies st risk. I know we're all in a horrible place right now but it would be worse if the children infect each other offer bring or home and infect there families. Please consider there lives

Mahalo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Steven Kam <steven.kam@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Steven Kam , a 21+ year English Language Arts / Drama teacher at Pearl City High School, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday, 6/28/2020: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Rosenlee from HSTA is correct on stating that "returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the 'health and safety of students and staff is the priority and thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness are the fundamental drivers to reopen schools.' This is not making the health and safety of students and staff the priority, and by mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness."

I formally request that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steven H.Y. Kam
Pearl City High School

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Steven H.Y. Kam

English Language Arts Department
Sophomore English Language Arts (II) Teacher
Drama / Acting

Pearl City High School
2100 Ho`oki`eki`e Street
Pearl City, Hawai`i 96782
Phone: (808) 307-5500
Fax: (808) 453-6521
www.pearlcityhs.org
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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Airborne Threat of Covid 19

Clayton Chung <cchung1@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board Members of Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Clayton Chung, I have five (5) grandchildren's attending the following schools: Wheller Elementary School, Wheeler Middle School, and Mililani High School. I am a retired police sergeant of the Honolulu Police Department.

My focus and concern is the safety of the children while in school. Namely in the classroom. On June 6, 2020; I read a CNBC article about scientist and the COVID 19 airborne threat based on a New York Times article.
The article stated a number of factors are important for students to be in a classroom.

Air conditioners should be off. Windows should be opened. Airborne droplets from a persons mouth or nose could travel up to six feet. And if a airborne droplet floats, the distance could travel a further distance.

Dr. KISHIMOTO related that distance of students may be three (3) feet apart. I strongly urge the board to consider minimum distance between students and students to teacher should be at least six (6) feet apart.

The World Health Organization (WHO) was contacted by CNBC and it was related that WHO would be reviewing the study noted in the New York Times article.

Also noted in the article in addition to distance was hand washing and mask. In school, once droplets falls on a table top, the students have to be reminded hand wash throughout the school day.

I thank the Board for the opportunity to share my concern to keep a minimum distance of six (6) feet between students and students and teacher. Also, shutting off air conditioning and opening of windows to keep a free flow of air in the classroom.

Mahalo,
Clayton Chung
Mililani, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tracy Bufil <t.bufil@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:33 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Tracy Bufil and although I am not in the DOE system anymore (I was a paraprofessional tutor and a substitute teacher), my daughter is an elementary teacher. I'm worried not only for her health but also the health of her students.

I vehemently disagree with the recently stated plan by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement.

I beg that the Board, State, DOE and all concerned parties to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan, as supported by the CDC and all respectable infectious disease experts, as well as state and federal epidemiologists.

Clearly, teachers and students, as well as all staff, will encounter less risk and be safer with the universally recognized 6 foot rule. Please make the responsible decision - it is literally a life and death decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tracy Bufil
--
Sent from Gmail Mobile

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Leslie Mack PINK CRUSH <leslie.mckeague07@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Leslie Mckeague. I live on the West side of O'ahu and my daughter Moanike'ala attends middle School at Nanakuli High and Intermediate. I am an active community member within my community on various levels of engagement. I am greatly concerned with the new mandate and guidence regarding the social distancing of our students, returning to school in August.

Currently our state is mandating a 6 feet social distancing for the general public. I would expect the same regulation be placed upon our students as well. To minimize the required distance from 6 feet to 3 feet displays a discrimination towards our children that can be perceived as their lives are not as important enough to maintain the 6 ft distancing implmented by our local legislators and federal government.

Medical studies have confirmed that 6 feet should be the required distance in preventing the spread of this Covid-19 virus. There is no vaccines or medication that have been confirmed to cure or minimize the likelihood of a person contracting and fighting off this dangerous virus. Minimizing the mandated distance increases the exposure and likelihood of our young ones contracting a disease that their developing bodies may not have the immunal strength to fight off. Although there have been theories and trials of medication usage, that could potentially cure Covid-19, nothing has been confirmed to actually cure this disease.

Fact is the medication that has been tested have caused more harm to patients and survivors of Covid-19, such as, permanent heart complications and even death to name a few. Minimizing exposure would be the best option and ONLY option in preventing our children from contracting this horrid virus.

As a parent I ask that you honor the mandated social distancing that our state legislators and federal government have enforced upon the general public, within our children's school environment. We are trusting that you will provide the safest environment for the most precious people in our lives, our children.
If at all possible providing a system that will allow students to rotate between physical classroom time and virtual classroom time could be an option? It could be a rotation between class and home school. Which could assist in providing more space to allow the 6 feet distancing and also allow parents and children further home school intergration time which could assist in strengthening family dynamics.

Maybe creating a rotating track between the week? An idea is to split the class in two groups and have them rotate weekly. One week they focus on online classes at home and the following week they have in classroom time. It will allow then the face to face interaction they need with their teachers to address questions regarding classroom work, provide social interaction with other students(at a distance), and allow the students to experience school dynamics in a unique way.

Another option could be reintergrating old concepts, programs that allow children more outdoor experiences? Again separating student classrooms to a maximum of 15 in class and the remaining students can attend their extra-curricular classes or additional activities, club time? Rather than having them attend during recess. I believe that may minimize the school schedule? Which means less exposure. For the older preteen and teens. Perhaps even create new programs more comprehensive activities? I would be more then happy to assist.

For the younger children maybe an increase in recess breaks or incorporate meditational walks or nature walks? Perhaps more physical activities? This virus could provide an increase in physical activity, social emotional activities, and meditations activities which could be a contribution to wellness and self care. It can be a catalyst that assists in decreasing the increasing rates of depression and obesity?

These are serious times and lives are literally at stake. A serious decision needs to be made in order to prevent innocent children from contracting a volatile virus that could cause the death of many community members. Changing an orthodox system to meet a new norm is not a heinous act. It is an action that will likely cause some temporary discomfort for some. But will be adjusted to and accepted by all. As long as it will save the lives a change in the system, which will maintain the safety of our children, would be understandable and appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to read my

concerns and suggestions. Please feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions or support in keeping our keiki safe.

With kind regards and hopeful intentions,

Ms. Leslie Mckeague

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jeffry Moomaugh <jeffry.moomaugh@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Sheryl Ogawa <sheryl.ogawa@k12.hi.us>

Dear DOE, My name is Jeff Moomaugh, a science teacher teaching middle school sciences at PHIS. I am writing this email to testify on the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I feel the 3 foot distancing between students is not adequate to allow for social distancing and the recommended 6 feet of distance. I have a compromised immune system and feel it will be unsafe for teaching when students are sitting in closer proximity to one another in the classroom. Even though this is in one direction for students to sit they will turn around in their chairs to talk with peers - this is the social nature of middle school students. Do you plan to put students in head braces forcing them to face in the same direction? If this is the case then 3 feet will suffice.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of this important issue,

Jeff Moomaugh
PHIS Science Teacher

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI (A)

Serena Nishihara <snishiha@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, CRosenlee@hsta.org

Aloha Board of Directors and Mr. Rosenlee,

Rather than having students return to the classroom I think that we should just continue on with online learning and holding students accountable for each day. To have them return to the classroom for teachers as well as students would be quite risky and may lead to a litigation problems for the Department of Education if there may be students and teachers afflicted with covid 19 than this would open up a can of worms .

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

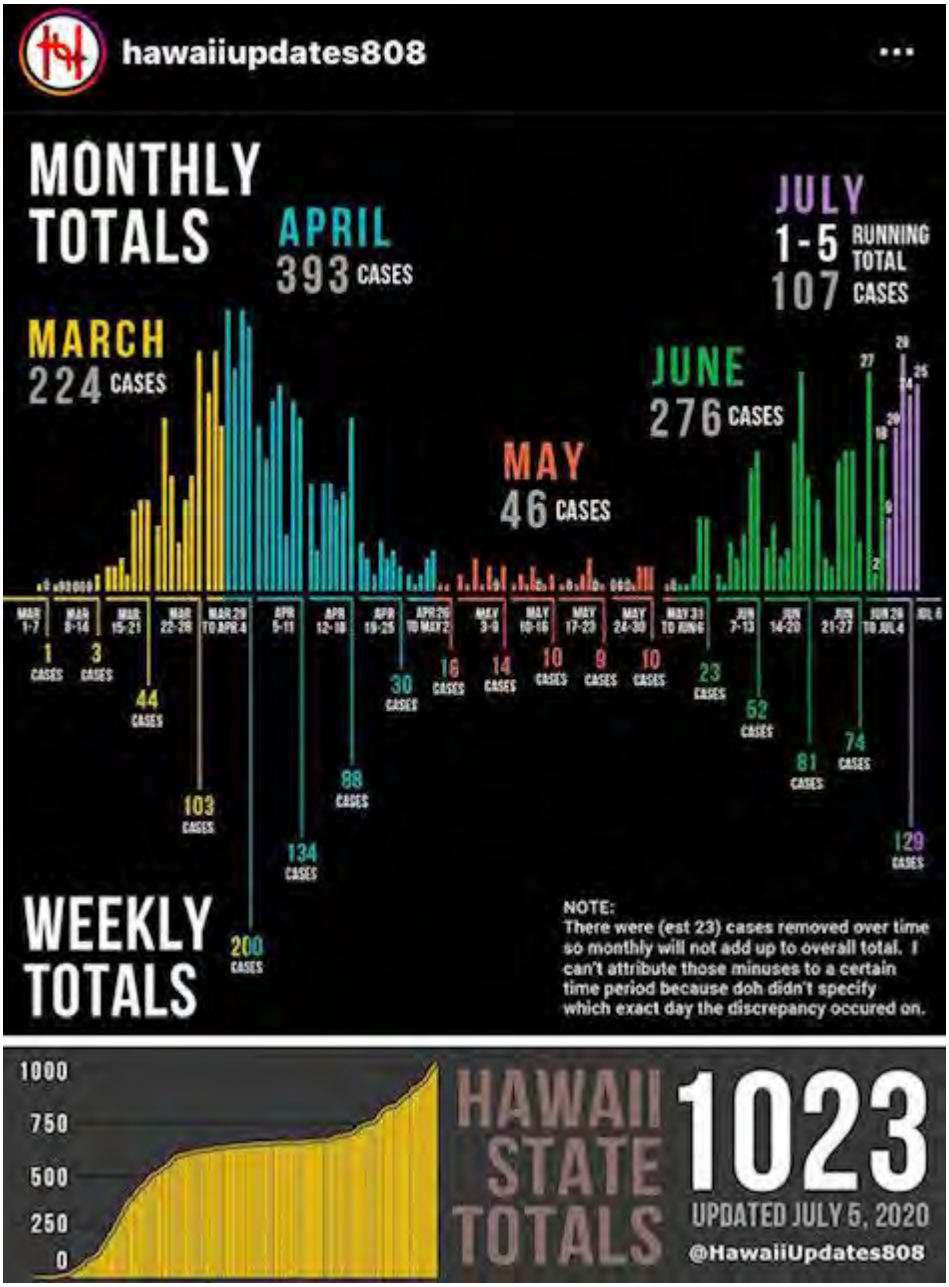
Testimony

Kimberly Pico <alkp05@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:49 AM

- My name is Kimberly Pico & I'm an EA at King Kekaulike High School. Also a parent to children at King Kekaulike & Samuel Enoka Kalama intermediate School
- I do NOT support the plan of having only 3 feet space in between the kids when in classroom & also the thought of it not being mandatory for kids to wear mask in classrooms. The cases are much worse than when school was canceled in April & I don't understand how you can feel it will be safe.

  This chart shows how bad it's getting. Please make it 6 feet apart or do distance learning for the 1st quarter at least. Thank you!



Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Courtney Harrison <courtney.harrison@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,
My name is Courtney Harrison and I am a teacher at Hilo Union School. I am testifying on behalf of Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

If implemented, the 3 feet distancing requirement could have **very** devastating effects for all of us, including our students, their families as well as our families. As a teacher and a person that was recently diagnosed with Diabetes, I am considered high-risk. I also live at home with both parents who are Diabetic in addition to other underlying conditions. I fear that this new requirement could increase the likelihood of me contracting COVID and putting my parents and family at risk.

As we head back to work, we are already placing ourselves at risk to adequately do our jobs because.. well, teaching matters. Therefore, I humbly ask you to please reconsider the 3 feet distancing requirement and adhere to CDC guidelines of at least 6 feet. Furthermore, why is 6 feet required in stores, restaurants, and public places but only 3 feet in schools? In addition, in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State and HSTA, 6 feet distancing was agreed upon. In closing, please help keep us safe so that we can continue teaching and educating the future generation. Thank you for your time in this matter.

Sincerely,
Courtney Harrison
Hilo Union School Teacher

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft vs. 6ft.

Ronald Watabayashi <ronald.watabayashi@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher in the high risk category due to health and age I am very concerned. I fully understand the importance of getting the students back to school and in the classroom but need to weigh the importance of my health vs. teaching which I really enjoy. At this point I believe my responsibility to myself and family would come first.
Concerned Teacher

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Gayle Fujita Ramsey <fujitaramsey@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a teacher at Kailua High School and I am very concerned with a 3 feet social distancing vs. 6 feet min. WITH mask of social distancing.

Follow the science, not what parents want. We are not a babysitting service. If we were then you should pay us the hourly babysitting service. I am sure you have seen what babysitters make per child. With that said, sorry for the venting...

This has all been very frustrating. Guidelines are changing because politicians and those that need to be liked want to please the majority regardless of if it is safe just because they want to keep their positions.

Think about it. It is not okay to be the "ONLY and first state to open schools" because you want to be recognized for it regardless of the danger you are putting not only teachers and administrators in danger but the keiki and their families.

We know that in Hawaii homes are often multi generational and this means if a student gets COVID19 then the family will most likely get it. Our homes are not mansions where we can place a sick individual where they will not be in contact with others. We have small homes and if lucky we have 1.5 bathrooms. How do you see a family designating an individual to an area in the home to only be used by them so they do not contaminate others? I don't see this happening.

I hear students need social emotional support that schools provide. How will you provide social emotional support when the student realizes they may have brought home COVID19 which led to other family members testing positive and dying? Are you prepared to carry that on your shoulders? **Decisions you make if you reduce 6 feet to 3 feet means you are RESPONSIBLE for every death that occurs caused by a student or school employee.**

I don't understand why people feel the need to dismiss science and the data coming in from other countries and states in regards to how this virus affects us. Until we have a vaccine that works and a proven cure we should not be in school f2f.

This blended learning idea sounds great and I guarantee you schools will be shutting down causing confusion just like it did earlier in the year. Schools are not prepared to keep students from socializing in the way that they should to be safe. Classrooms are not big enough, hence the proposed 3 ft. reductions. I am sorry but Mr. Anderson is not a scientist and his proposed reduction of distance and not wearing masks is idiotic. He is not following the science and data coming in. Or is this his plan... kill off the population of Hawaii Keiki? Sounds bad to say but if this happens he will carry this burden... or will he blame others?

Please make the right decision. 6 feet or more as Dr. Fauci recommends and many other reputable individuals who follow the science WITH A MASK. Face shields with a mask. Yes, phonologically students may be delayed. I would rather have a delay in learning then to lose any keiki or have keiki have long term health issues.

We need to think with the future in mind not what we need to do RIGHT NOW because parents want babysitters. It is time for parents to take responsibility for their children. This does not mean send them to school because that is the least expensive babysitter.

Gayle Fujita Ramsey, MEdT dual certification SpEd & Secondary Ed.
Kailua High School
808.439.7442

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

jaime.lewis81@yahoo.com <jaime.lewis81@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:36 AM
Reply-To: "jaime.lewis81@yahoo.com" <jaime.lewis81@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I do not agree with the decision to relax requirement of face masks and change the social distancing guidelines to 3 ft of distance for our students. As we begin the school year the Governor is planning on lifting restrictions to travel as well. My concern is that if we relax too much we will see spikes and have to distrupt the school year again with closing of schools which will negatively impact our keiki. We need to go slow to go fast. We need consistency and precaution. I live with a person that has preexisting conditions that has proven to exasterbate and even cause death if infected with coronavirus. I will not feel safe returning to school as a teacher or in any capacity if we do not maintain the requirement of face masks and social distancing of at least 6ft.

Mahalo,
Jaime Lewis

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Keep students & teachers safe!

Lina Manning <linalady@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Why in the world is Hawaii state contemplating a distance of ONLY 3 feet? Every report I listen to by health officials recommend 6 feet! I'm a 66 year old teacher and I do not want to put myself or my precious students at risk in the classroom! Please reconsider this I'll advised suggestion!
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lina Manning <linalady@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please protect teachers and their students by making a six foot distance mandatory for all Hawaii classrooms! I am a 66 year old women and am scared to death that a three foot distance is NOT safe! Please do not make me choose between my heath or my job! Keep everyone as safe as possible by following the advise of ALL national health care professionals!
Lina Manning
Honokaa Elementary School
Big Island Hawaii

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

pj_paleka <pj_paleka@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am submitting testimony in regards to the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a half time clerk as well as a meal clerk at the high school.

Your plan to re-enter students & teachers to school has me feeling insecure and uncomfortable. Let me tell you why.

First, a 3-feet distancing between students is ludicrous.

You are jeopardizing the health and safety of our youngest citizens by blatantly going against the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Studies have confirmed that droplets travel beyond 3-feet. In addition, the CDC guidelines state that a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN.

This brings me to my next concern of sitting 3-feet apart WITH NO MASKS.

It is my understanding that students will be allowed to remove their masks after initial entrance onto campus every day. It is understandable. They have that right. However, taking off their masks doubling with sitting only 3-feet apart from each other puts them in unsafe territory. Let me reiterate, a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN.

Finally, my last, but not the least, concern. According to the plan, the 3-feet distance will work IF students are facing forward at all times while in the classroom.
HAVE YOU EVER TAUGHT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL? Students will turn to speak to each other. Your ideal scenario of students "only looking forward" while sitting in the classroom inhibits our students from ENGAGING (from a safe distance) and learning. This is irrational.

I am apprehensive about returning to the school under these circumstances knowing I am at high risk due to health issues. Your 3-feet component of the plan will put many students & educators in harm's way. Please revise this plan to reflect your concern and care for our health and safety AND NOT YOUR DESIRE TO PACK IN AS MANY STUDENTS AS YOU CAN INTO A CLASSROOM WITH THE BARE MINIMUM DISTANCING.

THANK YOU!

Paulie Jean A. Paleka-Ku

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kari Swangel <kboox2@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:56 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it ma concern,

My name is Kari Swangel and I teach first grade at Kealakehe Elementary in Kona, on the Big Island. I have been teaching for 25 years and have thoroughly enjoyed my career thus far. I was born to be a teacher and I have made countless sacrifices for my job when it comes to my personal life over the years.

I WILL NOT HOWEVER SACRIFICE MY LIFE FOR YOUR BENEFIT.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rachel Tsutsui-Keuma <ms.rachel.tk@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year"

I think schools should be required to keep 6 feet distance between students, teachers, and any other people on school campus. It is vital to keep safe during this time so we don't want to have to prepare for the school year for nothing. If one person catches it with less than 6 feet distance, everyone in that class will be susceptible and will all have to quarantine. Not only quarantine, but put their families lives in danger as well. Families with multiple children will have exposure to multiple classrooms. We need to keep everyone as safe as possible, otherwise all this preparation for face-to-face meetings will be for nothing.

Rachel Tsutsui-Keuma
Kindergarten teacher at Wahiawa Elementary School
Mother of Anuenue School Student, First Grader

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

SAFETY IN THE CLASSROOM DURING COVID-19

Raenette Marino <raenettemarino@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha:

As a teacher, grandparent and a life-time member of the Hawai'i 'ohana, I am relying on the State of Hawaii and its Department of Education to protect jme, my grandchildren, and the rest of my Hawai'i 'ohana by implementing 6-feet distancing requirements and masks. Anything less is putting our lives in jeopardy and prolonging this pandemic.

Raenette A. Marino
Hilo, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Three foot distancing

kaynaq@juno.com <kaynaq@juno.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I am writing to share my concerns about the three-foot distancing policy proposed. I believe it is an unsafe guideline at this time. I hae worked as a special education teacher for thirty years at the high school level.

There is still much to learn about COVID19 but one thing we do know is that it is highly contagious--especially with prolonged contact. Students will be together in one classroom at a minimum of forty minutes, but spending an entire day at school is is a minimum of six hours of prolonged contact. Spending long hours with a three foot minimum increases opportunities for exposure. That is a danger we need to avoid. We do not want schools to become the next epicenter of this disease.

Although it is true that children seem to fair better against the disease, do we want to burden a child with the guilt that they brought the disease into their homes and that is why grandma or grandpa had to go to the hospital? We need to do our best to keep the children and their families safe.

If we were restructuring the classroom with plexiglass barriers at each desk, the smaller distance might be a consideration but that is not happening right now. Consequently, six feet social distancing needs to be maintained as a policy and safety protocol.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kay Naquin

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristina McCracken <kmccracken808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
My name is Kristina McCracken and I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI A (Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for the reopening of schools plan for SY2020-21). I wish to share my concern regarding the implementation of a 3 feet social distance requirement for classrooms. I write to you as both a parent of an 8 year old at Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science and a teacher at Keau'au Middle School in disagreement with this change in safety measures. As much as I wish I could pack my classroom full of my students in August and return to normalcy as much as possible I do not wish to do so at the expense of their safety or my own. Guidelines have, from my understanding, always been a 6 foot distance to maintain safety during the COVID pandemic. I am unsure where this new 3 feet guideline is coming from but until I hear from health professionals that this is the case I cannot see risking spread of the virus. As a parent I would feel unsafe doing so as well especially given the fact that my son and I live next door to, and interact daily with, my aging parents. I urge anyone in charge to reconsider this change and consider the ramifications that a risky move right now could carry with it.

Thank you for your time,
Kristina McCracken
(808)333-6754

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY--SUPPORT 6-feet apart

Marybeth Baldwin <marybethhamilton808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:17 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Marybeth Baldwin. I am a parent of a HIDOE student as well as a teacher at a Hawaii Public Charter School.

I am writing to ask that the BOE **mandate that student desks are placed 6 feet apart** in a classroom setting. Anything closer than that poses too great of a risk to our students and teachers. I understand this will be difficult to implement, but revising schedules and rethinking school for this year is a small price to pay for safer conditions in a pandemic. Although the DOE has stated that 3-feet apart if students are all facing the same direction is safe, anyone who has been in a classroom knows that students don't only look in one direction during class.

I thank you for your support in trying to keep our schools safe.

-Marybeth Baldwin

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

kanewawilkinson <kanewawilkinson@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion on VI(A)

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

As a grandma who has legal custody of my 2 granddaughters ages 8 & 9 I do not agree with your 3 feet distance plan in classrooms. It is not safe for our children to even be back at school in August. If the social distance requirement for everyone is at 6 feet then why the hell would children be able to sit in a classroom at 3 feet apart?!? Makes no sense! It doesn't matter if they're facing forward! Children will be children and I feel any plan you make at this time will not be safe. Especially with the covid count spike. I understand that children need to be in school but and I need them to get educated but not at the risk of their health as well as everyone else's. I didn't fight to get custody of my grandchildren to risk their health and well being like this! I feel that if u need to keep all children back a year and have them stay home and do distance learning that would be much better than them and their teachers and families getting covid 19.. Think about it would you like that on your conscience?

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

School reopening

John Dimartino <jadimartino780@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a ninth grade teacher at King Kekaulike High School. I am in my mid fifties and dealing with diabetes and high blood pressure. I am very concerned about the health and safety of myself, my colleagues and the families of all our students! I think three feet of social distance is inadequate especially given that masks aren't mandatory.

Sincerely,

John DiMartino
--
Thanks,

John DiMartino

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Tesitmony

Agnes Yamauchi <agnes.yamauchi@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Agnes Yamauchi and I am a counselor at Hilo High School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am extremely concerned about the reopening of schools, as a whole, but more so with the implementation of a 3 foot distance requirement. It is evident that more and more people are being exposed as the country reopens. Opening schools will only open another opportunity for further spreading of the virus. The spreading of the virus is inevitable and we will have to close schools again! Although students need to be in school, especially at the younger ages, let's make every effort to keep them safe and healthy by keeping them as far away from one another as possible, minimally 6 ft apart, not 3 ft.

Although I am not a classroom teacher, I am very concerned as my husband and my parents are considered in the high risk group because of their age and my father's health. I do not want to bring it home to them. Thus, although I am advocating for student safety, I am also advocating for my and my colleagues' health and well-being. Without teachers, there are no classrooms for students to go to.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Agnes Yamauchi

Some themes & topics to personalize:

- As parent and teacher
- As teacher with compromised immune system
- As a teacher caring for high-risk kupuna

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on discussion item VI(A) Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools 20/21

John Dimartino <jadimartino780@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a ninth-grade teacher at King Kekaulike High School. I am in my mid-fifties and dealing with diabetes and high blood pressure. I am very concerned about the health and safety of myself, my colleagues, and the families of all our students! I think three feet of social distance is inadequate especially given that masks aren't mandatory.

Thanks,

John DiMartino

Testimony - Discussion Item VI(A)

Anthony McCurdy <amccurdy808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I write to you to testify regarding Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My name is Anthony McCurdy. I teach at James Campbell High School in Ewa Beach and my daughters attend Kapolei High School in Kapolei.

I would specifically like to address two items: 3 vs 6 foot distancing and mandatory masks.

I teach photography and normally have between 32 to 35 students in my Photo 1 classes. Even with splitting our classes into smaller groups, my room will be pretty tight for me to walk around the class as students are working with the digital cameras. We also need to be able to ensure students are spaced out properly when they are working on editing their photos on our desktop computers.

Three feet will not be enough distance to keep my students safe. It is not sufficient to provide protection against spreading COVID19 through talking and interacting.

Requiring a six foot distance between students at their desks is the safer choice and we need to consider student safety first and foremost.

Keep in mind that those students also go home very often to multi-generational households with elderly grand- and great-grandparents in addition to parents, siblings and other relatives, so community health is a real concern here. My own daughters live with us in a multi-generational household of ten people, two of whom have serious risk factors for catching COVID19.

I also urge you to do whatever you can to make masks mandatory for students, teachers, staff and visitors.

We have heard that the DOE is not going to make masks mandatory in school. This is a serious mistake.

While there will always be a few potential exceptions to be made for medical reasons (medically fragile students, etc.), the reality is that making masks optional leaves us wide open for spreading COVID19 regardless of distancing.

Will most students wear masks because we ask them to? Yes, because most students are decent people and respond well to positive, rational discussions about the benefits of certain desired behaviors.

Will all students wear masks because we want them to? No, and we know this already. There will be a small percentage of students who will not wear masks if not required to and that is enough to create opportunities for infection.

I am concerned for my daughters who attend high school because I do not want to see them getting sick and potentially suffering serious consequences because of another student's carelessness or desire to be free of a mask.

I am also concerned for myself as a person with higher risk of both infection and damage or death because I am Type I diabetic. I am willing to share this information with you because I think it is important that you understand there are many teachers who are at higher risk and unmasked students threaten their health, too.

Please understand that I want to go back to school. I miss my students and I miss teaching. This has not been a fun vacation and I want to go back to work.

However, I am loath to risk my daughters' health, my students' health, the health of my community, and yes, my own health, to accommodate more students packed into classrooms who are not required to wear masks.

This seems to me a recipe for potential disaster where we are not taking common sense precautions for reasons that are not clear to me or anyone else I have discussed this with.

Please keep us properly distanced at 6 feet and make masks mandatory for the sake of our keiki, our teachers and our communities.

Very truly yours,

Anthony McCurdy

--
Anthony McCurdy
808.675.6859
amccurdy808@gmail.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Six Feet Distancing at School Please

Ellen Stone <ellen.stone17@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I teach middle school Special Education. Seating these kids three feet apart facing forward will not prevent them from turning sideways to interact with each other. They do this all the time! I am seriously considering using my sick leave to avoid the situation!
Thanks for your consideration!
Ellen Stone
Kohala Middle School
Hawaii Island

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Summer Tan <summeramtan@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Summer Tan and I am a teacher at your school, Salt Lake Elementary. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): "Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the school year 2020-2021. As both a first grade teacher and a parent, I am definitely not comfortable with modifying down to 3 feet apart in my classroom. This is not making the health and safety of myself, my family, my students, and my coworkers a priority. I also come home to family members who are immunocompromised. I am in strong disagreement of this proposal. Thank you for taking the time to read through my testimony.

Sincerely,
Summer Tan

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Avery E <averyespinda@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Avery Espinda and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021". I am going to be a first year teacher at Iliahi Elementary School this upcoming school year. The stress of being a first year teacher is one thing, but to be a first year teacher during a pandemic is far more overwhelming. I am extremely concerned about the safety regulations in each classroom by having only a 3-foot distance between students and their teacher. With 20 plus students in my 2nd grade classroom, how does that ensure the safety of my students, their families, and myself? It is extremely difficult for students (especially those in primary grade levels) to stay in their seats all day and not turn and talk to their peers, all while trying to wear a mask. Every day we are told to practice social distancing by creating AT LEAST a 6-foot distance between those around us, so why should that differ in the classroom? Speaking for myself, I go home every single day to a father who is type 2 diabetic, a mother with high cholesterol and high blood pressure, and an 85 year-old grandmother. It's unsettling to know that I may expose my vulnerable family members to Covid-19 because of poor safety conditions in my own classroom. Parents shouldn't have to send their children to school with doubts and concerns for their safety. As a teacher, it is my ultimate duty to ensure the safety of my students, and I can't uphold this responsibility if my students aren't distanced at least 6 feet from each other. Please take the safety of teachers, students, and all of our household members into consideration when I say that all classrooms should be configured with 6-feet between student desks. No matter what, the 2020-2021 school year is going to be far more different and riskier than any other. However, one way that we can ease some of the many concerns for this upcoming school year is to make student desks 6-feet apart, not 3-feet. Thank you for your time and I hope you take my words into consideration.

Best Regards,
Avery E.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Naedine Amoroso <namoroso77@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi my name is Naedine Amoroso and j am a teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary. I am writing to testify against what was shared about reopening our schools for this school year due to the impact of CoVid. I believe 3 ft is not safe, it is a danger to our students and to my health as well since I live and take care of my Kupunas well being at home. Why is that schools are suggesting 3 ft, when we go out in public such as restaurants, grocery stores, or in public areas the requirement is 6 ft distancing. DOE needs to be consistent and abide to the CDC laws worldwide. I am tired of Teachers not getting the respect they deserve and how education is not put first as they claim it is.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Plea to keep activism out of Hawaii's public schools

Jennifer Cornforth <jencornforth0121@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello, Island family.

I am a mother of two teenagers on Kauai, one of whom attends Kappa'a High School. I'm writing because I am concerned at the climate of activism and righteous rage engulfing the mainland right now.

With protests, riots, harassment, and defacement of public statues, the activism I'm seeing on the mainland in the name of "justice" is not in keeping with the spirit of unity and aloha that makes Hawaii a place we all love. It pains me to turn on the TV or go on social media and see young people shouting in the faces of police officers. That disrespect has no place in my home, and I'd like to think it has no place on my island, either.

We in Kauai are grateful for our police, as we are for all our public servants. The police, in particular, are our uncles, fathers, cousins, aunties and friends. They are not our enemy. Beyond that, they deserve to be treated with the same respect which I expect my children to show all adults and authority figures.

Political activism goes beyond what we see on our screens. Already, I know of two local businesses who have been targeted by angry mobs from the internet—so sure of their moral righteousness that they will harass business owners on the other side of the planet because one of their employees said something off-color on tiktok.

Many hearing this may support these tactics. They may feel it's proper and correct that young people block roads, spit at veterans, and conduct online terrorism against strangers, so long as the correct political and social objectives are met.

That's fine. That is your opinion.

But I do not want you teaching that to my children.

I am pleading with you to keep politics and division out of Hawaii's public schools. Whatever activism individual teachers and administrators want to engage in in their private time is fine. But it has no place in the classroom—whether virtual or physical.

Critical Race Theory, in particular, has no place in the K-12 classroom. Hawaii is a majority-minority state. We are a melting pot. The last thing we need is to single out races—particularly white people or Asians—as targets for hatred. Nothing good can come of that project.

With COVID 19, and record unemployment, our state has enough troubles of our own without importing more from the mainland. Please, when schools open again, let them do so with a spirit of cooperation. Let us join together to educate our kids with open-hearted love and understanding. Let's leave politics out of Hawaii's public schools.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Cornforth
Kilauea, Kauai

(For those interested in the problems with divisive "Woke" activism, and parents' objections to this ideology, please watch this great video from a former Wall Street Journal writer, and parent in Fairfax, Connecticut. She sums up these issues better than I could. Mahalo. https://twitter.com/asranomani/status/1276645799854665734?s=21)

Sent from my iPad

Testimony

Rhonda Masuda <rhmasuda@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Rhonda Masuda <rhmasuda@gmail.com>

Dear BOE Members,

I am writing to you in regards to Discussion Item IV(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." As an elementary school teacher with 27 years of service and an alternate caregiver to aging parents, I am very disappointed and shocked at the ambiguous wording and negligent terms that are put forth in Reopening School Plans. It puts students, teachers, families, and OUR community at risk for another long term "stay at home" and will open the DOE to law suits.

First of all, to think that young children can be trained to remain in seat, facing front without unconsciously turning to talk, reaching out, compassionately sharing supplies with a neighbor, engaging with friends and peers, and/or touching their own faces, masks while only maintaining 3ft of distancing is unreasonable and dangerous. Why is the public mandated to keep 6ft of distancing to ensure safety during a 20 min. exchange of service at a business BUT, only 3ft is required for children and teachers who may spend up to a couple of hours contained in a classroom?

Moreover, schools and teachers should be provided "NO touch" type thermoscan thermometers to efficiently screen and isolate students who may be infected and expose others. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. Is that a small price to pay to ensure the health and lives of 20-30 students, daily.

Lastly, as an older teacher over the age of 50, who provides check ins, meals, and transportation to elderly parents. I need to keep myself safe, healthy, and clean. Contracting and spreading the virus could be devastating, deadly to myself and my family. It goes without mentioning the loss of quality learning time if I am no longer able to work with my students. Please reconsider and mandate to change, include the above

guidelines and policies. Do we no longer treasure and protect the lives of children and the most vulnerable?

Sincerely,

Rhonda Masuda

Mililani Uka Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

joshua.dimaya@k12.hi.us <10125503@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:11 AM
Reply-To: "joshua.dimaya@k12.hi.us" <10125503@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The CDC employs Doctors, epidemiologists, Ph.D's and experts in disease control. They have done large amounts of research to decide on 6 feet social distancing.

Does the DOE have Doctors, epidemiologists, Ph.D's and experts who work with diseases to decide that 3 feet distancing is safe enough to override the CDC's guidelines?

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot distance is Dangerous

libby lenzer <mslibbyvoyagerschool@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:11 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I write in order to testify that I oppose the idea that 3 feet distancing is safe for students and teachers. I have been following the guidelines for 6 feet distancing in every other arena in my life; why would the classroom be any different? I need to protect myself and others as best as I can and a 3 foot distancing measure is not acceptable.
Please make my concerns clear.
Thank you,
Elizabeth Lenzer
Special education teacher, DOE

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Mel Yoneda <mmyoneda@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Morning,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My son will be entering the Mililani High School as a freshman this school year.

As a parent, I am concerned that schools will reopen with spacing less than the recommended 6 feet distance between students.

Sincerely,
Melanie Yoneda

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Richard Toynton <richardtoynton@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

Please mandate CDC recommended six-feet-apart student spacing in classrooms to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission. I really don't want this school year sprinkled with student and teacher virus infections and the sadness of losing an older coworker (or even possibly a student.) Learning will be third priority behind safety and mourning the loss of our school ohana members. Can you imagine putting children at risk when the consequences are so high?

Sincerely, Richard Toynton
King David Kalakaua Middle School teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

reopening schools

Ashley Olson <ms.a.olson@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha e esteemed members of the Hawai‘i State Board of Education-

I can‘t help but notice that your meetings are virtual, and not face to face. This seems to indicate concern over the potential spread of Covid 19 if several people are in a contained space for an extended period of time. I would like to point out that your regular meeting space, while fully enclosed, is space that is climate controlled. The air is circulated through (presumably) clean air filters and an HVAC system that is well maintained. Very few public school classrooms in Hawai‘i enjoy these same amenities.

Sadly, the conditions of your meeting room- the one that is still not open for regular BOE business- are FAR superior to nearly every public school classroom in this state. The Memorandum of Understanding entered into between the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association and the Hawai‘i Department of Education, states "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible" is part of the reopening deal. It will NOT be possible, if the bait and switch of 6" to 3" between students and staff is allowed. Three feet between students means inches between teachers and students if a teacher is walking around the classroom, as we all know that teachers do.

Please ensure that, at the very least, all items within the MOU between the HSTA and HIDOE are enforced.

Unless and until you are willing to conduct ‘business as usual‘, unless and until every BOE member and every DOE official in the state building is ready and willing to come in to our classrooms- and teach our students with us in the gamut of circumstances across the state, under the same conditions students and teachers will be asked to face, you cannot ask this of teachers. You cannot keep asking teachers to give more than you, yourselves, are willing to give.

You cannot ask teachers to risk more than you, yourselves, are willing to risk.

Mahalo nui loa-

Ashley Olson
Lahainaluna High School
Maui

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Karen Kawahara <karen.kawahara@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a parent of a teenager who attends Mililani High School and a Grade 1 teacher at AAES I urge the board to mandate a 6 feet distance for students and staff for next school year for the safety of all.

Thank you,
Karen Kawahara

--
Karen Kawahara
August Ahrens Elementary School
(808) 307-7289

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Christine Putzulu <h4putzulu@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening school for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Christine Putzulu and I am speaking as both a teacher and grandparent. I teach at Daniel K. Inouye Elementary and my grandchildren attend Iliahi Elementary and Paia Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3-feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. Children are not stationary furniture that stays put all day. With 3-feet distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom, we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing.

If the universities are sticking to the 6-feet distance for adult students, why is the Department of Education (DoE) schools being asked to separate half that distance with children? I can't understand the justification that affords selective compliance with the sound advice of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) our nation's health protection agency. CDC saves lives and protects people from health threats. Covid-19 is definitely a health threat.

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, but it also will be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work, even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy needed to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will consume valuable instructional time and frustrate educational learning.

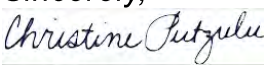
Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments of student health is nonsensical. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. With the threat of Covid-19, we should not allow students to enter school without first checking their temperature to prevent possible exposure to others. Screening with temperature checks would immediately identify students who are ill and would eliminate chances of later discovering through warning signs like coughing or sneezing. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a grandparent I am extremely concerned about the 3-feet distancing and wearing masks being optional. I want to send my children to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6-feet distance and required masks.

With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children's education, but their safety is a priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn't as careful with social distancing, they are children and don't know any better.

That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,



--
Christine Putzulu
Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School
1st Grade, GLC

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shantell-Tiare Tom <shantell.h.tom@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education & #39's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Shantell-Tiare Tom and I am speaking as both a teacher and community member of the Wai'anae Coast. I teach at Wai'anae High School and my nephews and nieces attend Ma'ili Elementary, Wai'anae Intermediate & Wai'anae High School.
As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I teach in a portable classroom that I already imagined with my 6ft space between desks, I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students for more than an hour a day; with student rotations. Prior to this pandemic, I had a space about 3 feet apart horizontally, but vertically is only a few inches. Even at 3 feet, students can reach another student's desk.
As a teacher with a compromised immune system, I put myself at a greater risk going out into crowded places. I've been cautious in my surroundings and I know in the school that I work in, I would have to build these good hygiene habits with my students and allow them to have a safe classroom environment for learning. I would hate to return to school, only to be shut down because 3 feet distancing and Teachers and Students will have to go back into Distance Learning. I hope this decision is thoroughly thought through because the repercussions will bring an exponential growth and not only students and teachers will be affected, but also all of our family that we are in contact with.

Please create a 6 feet distancing requirement in many of our classrooms, and all students and faculty need to wear the mask recommendations by CDC. Please do not endanger the health and safety of our keiki and teachers.

Shantell-Tiare Tom

I am writing this letter in regards to the recent HSTA agreement for SY 2020-2021 that is coinciding with Governor Ige's decision to re-open Hawaii for tourism. Coronavirus cases continue to skyrocket on the U.S. mainland and it's very apparent the virus is not under control. As a public school teacher at the 2nd largest high school in the state, I am extremely concerned that teachers and students are being thrown back into the classroom in the midst of the state reopening. Governor Ige has also neglected to clarify any details in regards to how this reopening will actually be managed and enforced with fidelity.

To add to this anxiety, the DOE is now only mandating a space of 3 FEET between students despite the fact that public recommendations have consistently been a minimum of 6 feet! Why is 6 feet required in every other public space except for a school?! Even worse, students are not expected to wear masks while being contained in a small classroom having close conversations. This goes against every piece of public health advice we have been given during the pandemic. It's absolutely ludicrous to expect students to face forward for an entire class and not turn their heads left or right to talk. It doesn't matter which direction desks are facing because people naturally move around- especially kids squirming in a hot classroom! This is a completely unacceptable way to "safely" open our schools back up. Think of the message that's being sent to students and teachers in terms of how much education is valued. We already have a critical teacher shortage in Hawaii. My colleagues and I are terrified of being forced to work under such unsafe and poorly structured conditions. Furthermore, how do you think this will in turn impact the QUALITY of education being provided if teachers are scared to come to work and talk or interact with kids?! I implore the Hawaii BOE to provide teachers and students with a safe learning environment that actually meets adequate public health guidelines.

9th Grade English Teacher
MEdT, NBCT

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Robyn Skudlarek <robynskudlarek@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a resource teacher in West Hawaii. It is extremely upsetting to learn that the HDOE has decided that three feet of separation in school settings is acceptable once schools reopen. This is in direct contradiction to the CDC and what we all have been operating under for months: that six feet separation, social distancing and hand washing are the ways to stem the spread of infection. Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the Board of Education that claims the ‘health and safety of students and staff is the priority'. This three feet policy is not in alignment with that priority.

Additionally, the University of Hawaii announced its reopening plans, which require six feet of social distancing in university classrooms and facilities. Why is six feet distancing required for a college freshman, but three feet is okay for a high school senior? Why is six feet required at Costco and at restaurants, but for public school teachers and students, it is only three feet? This is not okay. The same rules that apply to the public should be followed in our schools.

I strongly urge the BOE to mandate six foot spacing in all Hawaii K-12 schools. It's critical to the health and safety of all.

Mahalo,
Robyn Skudlarek
Resource Teacher
West Hawaii Complex Area

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony to the Hawaii Board of Education regarding mandate

Johnson Jim <jim_and_lynne@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:46 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha e,

My name is Lynne Johnson, and I am an educator at Maunawili Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A) about the seating/desk spaces. I do NOT feel comfortable accepting anything less than spacing that is 6 feet between desks. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. 3 feet between desks when students face forward is irresponsible because my first grade students will find it very difficult if not impossible to face forward the whole day. It is not a natural behavior for them, and to be succinct in point, forcing them to face forward is simply, just cruel. I would imagine that older students and adults wouldn't be able to adhere to this in a very effective way either! My students are 6 years old and would be much more productive and safe with 6 feet between them. I do not understand why it is a requirement and highly recommended by our government leaders, and NOT taken seriously in the school plans. Please, please reconsider our plea to use 6 feet as the guideline!

I am also very disturbed by the section about face masks not being required in the classroom! It is shocking that this was included in the plan. COVID 19 is airborne at this point and has been proven to be spread by droplets! Face masks reduce transmission of possible infection which is an inexpensive and simple prevention measure! It is imperative that we keep our keiki, teachers, and families safe and healthy by wearing face masks at ALL times and in ALL spaces when in public.

The explanation provided to the teachers, was that students would be in one "bubble" and would only be exposed to their cohort of peers so face masks would not be needed indoors. This justification simply does NOT make sense because students in this bubble are NOT limited in contact to only their classroom group. They go home, interact with families, and travel to areas outside our classroom, so the "bubble" is NOT a valid statement. Please reconsider and require face masks!

Can you imagine what happens if we don't open responsibly? If teachers and/or students begin contracting COVID-19 due to the sparse procedures presently offered (no face mask, temperature checks, 6 foot distancing), it will be a nightmare! Many substitute teachers are in the high risk category, and are NOT trained in distance learning! It is a skill that takes many hours of training and preparation.

This is a painful time for many with so many complications and unknowns. I want to be able to teach my students, support their families, and help get families back into their work days. I truly believe that it can happen, but only if we are cautious, diligent with procedures, and consistent in stringent preventive guidelines. Start with a blanket of safety measures, and lighten as we go along.
This is our kuleana and we should be trying to be part of the solution, not add more to the current problem of rising COVID cases.

Sincerely,
Lynne Johnson

Testimony

Daphna Ehrenhalt <daphnajackson@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Daphna Ehrenhalt and I am an educator at Kea'au Elementary School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I believe that it is putting teachers, students and their family members at risk if we do not follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet of distancing, as well as adhering to the CDC's mask guidelines. This is not what we agreed upon and this endangers our entire community.

I am a teacher who is not only at high risk, but I am caring for someone who is immunocompromised. If we cannot adhere to the CDC guidelines, not only will I be putting my life at risk, more so than I already do, but I will also be risking the life of my family. If my students are asymptomatic and are not wearing a mask, or standing 6 feet away from me, and they are just talking to me in class, I cannot protect myself or my family from them and I risk bringing home a virus that might kill me, my husband or put us in the hospital for an undetermined amount to time. Not to mention, Hawaii Island can not support a massive amount of teachers, parents and children all getting sick at the same time. Our hospitals would be overrun within weeks of schools opening up, and there will be even fewer teachers to teach our keiki. We are already fighting a teacher shortage, do not make it worse by risking our lives for the work we love so dearly. I must put my health, and the well-being above my career. I must put the health and well-being of the people who live on this island above all else.

Teachers should not have to risk their lives to teach. Students should not have to risk their lives to learn. Families should not have to risk their lives so their children can become educated. Please reconsider what you are doing and follow the CDC guidelines. You have an opportunity to save lives and lead the country in opening schools. Do not set the example of what not to do.

Thank you for your time in reading this,

Daphna Ehrenhalt

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 ft Distance

Kelsi Nitahara <kln114@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a teacher on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am writing this email to strongly urge you to keep the 6 ft distancing rule for our classrooms instead of allowing it to be only 3 ft.

I understand the urge is to get our students back into our classrooms to help bring the economy back and have parents return to work, but by lowering the distancing between the students allows for the possibility of spreading COVID even more.

Students will already be having a hard time with their masks, whether it be bringing it or wearing it properly and by allowing them to be even closer increases their risk.

As a parent myself, I would want my child to be protected and safe as much as possible when sending them to school. I'm sure other parents are feeling the same way and if everywhere else is imposing the 6 ft rule then we should be doing the same to help our students and parents feel safe.

We already seen that case numbers have risen in other states when schools reopened, so we should be trying our very best to make sure everyone is safe to our best capabilities and not cut any corners just because it's easier.

In conclusion, I am asking you to maintain the 6 ft social distancing in our classrooms.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

ana bingham <anapbingham@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My main concern is not the 3 feet distancing nor the mask wear. The greatest danger here is not taking students' temperature before they enter a classroom. A "health survey" every morning is not a trustworthy way to keep this big bad virus from spreading. I have been a teacher for 16 years. In my experience parents and students lie to their teachers all the time. Kids can't help themselves, but parents do not have an excuse. They will send their sick kids to school because they don't want to deal with them at home. Before covid 19, sick students brought colds, flu, strep, hand/foot mouth disease, scabies, chicken pox, measles to school with them. The point is parents and students cannot be trusted to tell the truth. Getting students' temperature will at least give the school a red flag and send students home before they spread anything.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kimberly Pennell <kbpennell28@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:04 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am offering my testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Kimberly Lauzon and I am a Social Studies teacher at Mililani High School, and a mother of two school age children, ages 9 and 12, who attend Mililani Uka Elementary and Mililani Middle School, respectively.

I am writing to ask you to mandate that there be 6 feet of spacing between desks, as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This essential spacing was agreed upon by the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) and the state just last week, and it is absolutely necessary in making our classrooms even somewhat safe during this very unsafe time. Three feet is not an acceptable amount of space between the desks, and it also violates the agreement that was made in good faith.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Lauzon

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot distancing

Michele N. <chele808@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:23 AM
Reply-To: "chele808@yahoo.com" <chele808@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

Please reconsider the 3 foot distancing in our public school classrooms. While it is important to get our children back in school, it is even more important to do it safely. Without proper safeguards like 6 foot distancing, the health risks of our school community are multiplied. Many teachers and custodial workers are older and in a higher risk category. They are often the main breadwinner of their household, so they have no choice other than to put their health and their life at risk everyday they show up for work. Safeguards are established in restaurants and offices, but are relaxed in schools? Please do the right thing and have schools adhere to a 6 foot distance, not 3.

Aloha,
Michele Nakama

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Students should be 6 feet apart

Lorna Hung <808bling@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I strongly believe that students should be 6 feet apart. If you are concerned with the health and safety of the students, teachers and staff, student need to be socially distanced.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Hanalei conda <hanaleiconda@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
I am a teacher, parent and foster parent. I have 6 kids in my household and have been also taking care of my other families kids who are essential workers. I am writing this as a concerned teacher for my school, community kids,as well as a my own. We are asking parents to figure out childcare for half days for the first 9 days as well as do virtual learning with them for 3 days of the week. I have 3 13-12year old students so they can stay at home most likely but I'm not about to expect them to do virtual learning with out someone there. I know I had to stay on them when we were doing it this last quarter. If these are my personal kids I worry about all the other children. I know many parents who basically were saying last quarter was an early summer and didn't do anything or make their kiddos do anything. We have also said that we will catch these kiddos up to their level and I'm very worried about how we will be able to do this in two days in person and 3 days virtually, when it was in some ways difficult when we had 5 full days with them. These are just some of my thoughts and I know our community is very concerned about this and many families are worried how they will be able to take care of their children as well as work their hours.
Mahalo nui for listening,
Hanalei Conda
First grade
Pahoa Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sheryl <skjudd2004@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:32 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I do not agree with the DOE's plan to open schools with just a 3 foot distance between students. The CDC guidelines state that 6 feet is the standard to follow. I feel that kids spaced at just three feet apart in the classroom is going to cause a lot of COVID19 spread and will cause the schools to shut back down and perhaps also the state. Why are we going against CDC guidelines?

I do not want my grandson to be put at risk or the rest of my family for that matter. If he gets sick, most likely so does the rest of the household.

Sheryl Judd
Grandmother of student at Palisades Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tina Rossman <christinamarie_kona@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:32 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

With cases continuing to rise in Hawaii, I believe schools should be given the option to start the school year with fully online learning. We are at more risk in August than we were in March. Returning to school campuses is not safe, not prudent and will lead to more cases of Covid-9 and possibly deaths.

Please protect our teachers. Please protect our students and their extended families. Start with online learning and go from there. Save lives!

Mahalo,
Tina Rossman

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Kari Swangel <kboox2@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:38 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Kari Swangel and I teach first grade at Kealakehe Elementary in Kona, on the Big Island. I have been teaching for 25 years and have thoroughly enjoyed my career thus far. I was born to be a teacher and I have made countless sacrifices for my job when it comes to my personal life over the years.

I WILL NOT HOWEVER SACRIFICE MY LIFE FOR YOUR BENEFIT.

The HSTA made an agreement with HIDOE on Saturday, June 27 with an established 6 foot social distance WITH masks for all students/staff. However when the "Return to School" plan was unveiled on July 1, it now states that a 3 foot distance without masks is now sufficient. There is no way I (or anyone else) would teach under those conditions

Our state rules follow the federal CDC guidelines of 6 foot distancing everywhere regardless of whether you're at a store, a restaurant, or a doctor's office.

Why aren't schools included in that rule? You are saying that teachers need to expose themselves daily so we can teach. THAT IS NOT OK. I invite you to come and sit all day in my classroom with students coughing, sneezing, vomiting, licking, sweating, and throwing snot at each other and you tell me if YOU would feel safe?

It is against the agreement you signed with the union, and just plain wrong.

Personally, it's not about me wanting to stay at home and teach, I want to teach face to face, but with rising COVID cases daily, It is simply not safe to do so right now. I have underlying medical conditions that will put me at a higher risk of getting COVID and frankly, my job is not worth dying for.

I urge you to please stick with the 6 foot distance with masks as it was stated in the original agreement.

Teachers want to teach, students want to learn, but only if it is SAFE to do so.

Mahalo,

Kari Swangel

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Against Return to School Standards

Jo Naka <jazs808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern;

I am writing as a parent who is against the superintendent's request to return to school with only 3 ft distancing and no face mask required.
The Mayor has requested face mask and it should be followed for school requirements as well.
Studies have shown that 6ft distancing is a safe distance and less transfer of germs.

Sincerely,
Concerned Parent

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony!

elizabeth sharrock <elizrocks@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Elizabeth Sharrock. I am a parent of a 7th grader. I also teach at his school - Kea'au Middle School. In addition, I care for my mother and mother in law who are both hugely important kupuna in our family. I am writing to address Discussion Item VI(A) concerning the distance students are to maintain from each other in the classroom.

I do not believe 3 feet is enough distance! I am upset that the DOE would propose to put all of its teachers and keiki in danger by allowing this. All the scientific evidence points to at least 6 feet of distance between individuals in order to reduce the risk of spreading Covid 19. If the DOE does not change this, I fear we will be facing a spike of cases in schools sooner than later. Ultimately, this would lead to a closure of schools sooner than later, as well.

This directive does not only affect our students and staff, but also every single person our students and staff come into contact with. I hope that you hear the outcry from our communities to keep us safe and to discuss and change this distance item. True, it may mean sending schools back to the drawing board in terms of planning for re-opening. However, precautionary measures to keep our islands safe are much more valued that a hasty return to schools.

I implore you to rethink what the DOE is proposing here. We cannot risk the lives of our citizens the way the DOE wants us to. I am waking up every day with anxiety about returning to the classroom and allowing my son to do the same. Please help set our minds at ease by at least requiring the DOE to meet the minimum safety requirements suggested by the DOH and CDC. Know that you play an important part in deciding the fate of our state in these scary times. You do not want an outbreak on your conscience and you have the means to prevent such risk-taking.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and listen to your island ohana. Our lives depend on it.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Sharrock
7th grade ELA teacher
Keaau Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Merry Kay Kiyan <mkkiyan@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:51 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am submitting testimony in regards to the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am an elementary teacher on the island of Hawaii.

Your plan to re-enter students & teachers to school has me feeling insecure and uncomfortable.

You are jeopardizing the health and safety of our youngest citizens by blatantly going against the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Studies have confirmed that droplets travel beyond 3-feet. In addition, the CDC guidelines state that a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing if a mask is worn.

Finally, my last, but not the least, concern. According to the plan, the 3-feet distance will work IF students are facing forward at all times while in the classroom.

Students will turn to speak to each other. Your ideal scenario of students "only looking forward" while sitting in the classroom inhibits our students from ENGAGING (from a safe distance) and learning.

I am apprehensive about returning to the classroom under these circumstances.

Your 3-feet component of the plan will put many students & educators in harm's way. Please revise this plan to reflect your concern and care for our health and safety

Aloha,
Merry Kiyan

Testimony

Brent Kiyan <bkiyan@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:54 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am submitting testimony in regards to the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am an elementary teacher on the island of Hawaii.

Your plan to re-enter students & teachers to school has me feeling insecure and unsafe.

You are jeopardizing the health and safety of our youngest citizens by blatantly going against the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Studies have confirmed that droplets travel beyond 3-feet. In addition, the CDC guidelines state that a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing if a mask is worn.

Finally, my last, but not the least, concern. According to the plan, the 3-feet distance will work IF students are facing forward at all times while in the classroom

I am apprehensive about returning to the classroom under these circumstances.

Your 3-feet component of the plan will put many students & educators in harm's way.

Please revise this plan to reflect your concern and care for our health and safety

Sincerely,

Brent Kiyan

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot ruling!!?

Adrian De Mello <ademello808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

How is it that when it comes time to make decisions and answer questions you are able to hide behind CDC rulings and deflect accountability but when it comes to STUFFING classrooms with this 3 foot rule you can unilaterally make decisions?

If you just want society's "babysitters" to be open so that you don't catch flack from the community then how about you pay us the rate of babysitters too...$1200 Per child per month x 36 students in each of my classes of which I have 6 ($1200x36x6) or do you want a mass exodus of teachers to quit/retire to become babysitters/tutors for just 5 children and make more than we make now educating a rotation of 200 students.

Thank you for being a politician instead of utilizing data based fundings to make intelligent decisions

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on School reopening

Jill Jacobs <jillybean05@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:58 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE

My name is Jill Jacobs. I teacher third grade at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kona. I will be the first to say that I don't believe that watching fully online works for Hawaii. It's not what is best for our students, however, we have to bring students back in a safe way. It is ludicrous to think that students will stay in their own space when they are only three feet away from each other. It is also unbelievable to think that students would stay facing forward. Have you been in a classroom. No matter how good a teachers classroom management is keeping all the kids facing forward is never going to happen.
I am beyond confused at the double standard of they have to be six feet apart in the cafeteria but only three in the classroom. That make no sense. If they have to be six feet apart outside and in the cafeteria they HAVE to six feet apart in the classrooms. Please let's be rational in this.
Thank you
Jill Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Erin Funkhouser <erin.funkhouser@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Erin Funkhouser and I am an educator at Kea'au Elementary School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I believe that it is putting teachers, students and their family members at risk if we do not follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet of distancing, as well as adhering to the CDC's mask guidelines. This is not what we agreed upon and this endangers our entire community.

I am anxious for the safety of my family and I have mixed feelingsalready about returning. I am excited to see my students and look forward to teaching, however I feel it is extremely important to do all we can to protect our community, students and staff. At the very least we should stay true to the guidelines that had already been set and agreed to. Six feet of social distancing and and mask use should be strictly adhered to.

Thank you for your time in reading this,

Erin Funkhouser

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

danyel erickson <danyelerickson@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:03 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

The following is my testimony in regards to the VIA Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Danyel Erickson and I am a First Grade teacher at Lana'i High and Elementary school. This will by my 3rd year teaching at this school. Our island is quite small with a very close community. We have 1 small hospital that has 0 ICU beds. So far we have been very vigilant against the spread of COVID 19 with 0 cases so far. In the event that someone is positive, the virus can spread very rapidly. A majority of our community is elder and health compromised. Three of my neighbors are over 90 years old. We do not have the staff or means to care for patients that become ill with the virus. If someone becomes very ill, they would have to be airlifted to another island for care.

I feel that going back to school with less than the CDC recommended 6ft distance and mandatory masks will put our entire island at risk. Many parents in our community have expressed displeasure with the current 3ft distance and voluntary masks.

I believe that schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.

Please consider our safety when making your decision.

Thank you,

Danyel Erickson

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

General Business Meeting, Agenda Item VI. Comment

Denise Mazurik <dmazurik808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: General Business Meeting, Agenda Item VI. Comment

Aloha,

My name is Denise Mazurik and I am a Media Teacher at Waiakea Intermediate School.

I disagree with the recently stated plan to allow school reopening with only 3 feet between desks. I have never known students to sit for an entire period facing the same direction. Desks only 3 feet apart, particularly when students are not required to wear masks, sets the stage for droplet transmission. Droplets are not only discharged when one coughs or sneezes, they are also discharged simply through talking (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html). It will be impossible to keep students (who haven't seen each other face-to-face in months) from turning their head to talk to a classmate. Even if they are trying their best to follow the rules, it will not come naturally and there will be plenty of times students unintentionally transmit droplets to each other. Because COVID-19 can be spread by pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic carriers (https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-1595_article) even parents who follow health screen protocols every morning with fidelity could still unknowingly be sending students capable of spreading COVID-19 to school.

I request the Board mandate a 6 foot social distance plan as supported by the CDC and as followed by businesses in Hawaii. A 6 foot mandate reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission, keeping everyone safer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Denise Mazurik
Media Teacher
Waiakea Intermediate School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Felicia Ferrance <hamakuagirl7@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher who will be teaching ELA at Honoka'a High School in the coming year. I have been with the DOE for 20 years and would like to respond to Discussion Item VI(A) from the DOE Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools for the 2020-21 School Year.
To begin, sending a message to the public, that mask-wearing will be optional for students and staff returning to school this year is inappropriate and dangerous.
We have recently witnessed a spike in the transmission of Covid-19 cases when Hawaiian Airlines staff attending a training where mask-wearing was optional! How can the DOE fail to learn from this example?
Our public schools will be hosting hundreds to thousands of people - all with the option not to wear a mask? Really?
Wearing masks is one of the easiest and most cost-effective safety measures to enact in what is going to be a complex and challenging year. This is something *most* everyone can do.
In addition I am wondering how the DOE decided that instead of the nationally recognized six-foot social distancing rule for safety, three feet would be fine in classrooms?
Will our COVID numbers remain low in the state of Hawaii if we dismiss these guidelines in our public schools? I don't think so.
This approach shows a blatant disregard for our keiki and their educators.

Sincerely,
Felicia Ferrance

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Returning back to school

Leonahe Crivello <blutiger40@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It My Concern,
I have two children at Molokai High School, three on Molokai Middle School and 3 in elementary.
I am totally against any child, let alone my own children to go back to school. Please do not allow this to happen!
Concerned Mom/Gma,
Tinamarie Joao-Matthews

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Kristine Chong <kristine.ikemoto@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:32 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on behalf of Discussion Item VI(A)Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. As a Special Education teacher and a mother of two young children, CLASSROOMS MUST BE CONFIGURED WITH 6 FEET BETWEEN STUDENTS. It is CRITICAL that our HEALTH AND SAFETY be #1 PRIORITY.

TEMPERATURE CHECKS and MASKS for ALL need to be MANDATED and REQUIRED as well!!

Why do we do 6ft apart in supermarkets and have to social distance ourselves every place else but in school. Especially with the rise of covid cases please think about your families, friends, and loved ones. Would you feel safe if they were exposed to such dangerous conditions?

Respectfully,
Kristine Chong
Work site: Aliamanu Elem.
Child's school: Ahuimanu Elem

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Baha Suzuki <baha808@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I would like to testify in the discussion on item VI(A) " Presentation on Department of Education comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020 - 2021 school year"

My name is Baha Suzuki , my grandson attends Maunawili Elementary School, my granddaughter will be attending Kailua High School and my daughter-in-law is a teacher at Aliamanu Intermediate School.

Please do not put our keikis, love ones, and teachers in danger.

The plan you have in place for the 2020 - 2021 does not meet the guidelines for safety as outlined in the CDC , State of Hawaii and City and County of Honolulu guidelines!

3 ft apart and no mandatory mask is NOT safe!!! It is a DANGEROUS environment.

Please protect our grandkids, love ones, teachers and the families they come home to.

Mahalo,
Baha Suzuki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Written Testimony for opening school year 2020-2021

nothing you need to know <shyanne012683@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:37 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I as a parent of a fourth grader in Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School am disagreeing with the Superintendent saying students can get as close as 3ft apart instead of 6 Feet. Why have we all been told by all channels that 6 feet or more is how much we have to distance, but for kids 3 feet is OKAY! Also kids won't be required to wear a mask when they are in the classrooms, only required when they are outside. There should be stronger guidelines to protect the health of all our kids and teachers. I have been debating homeschooling because I don't trust the current plans.

Mahalo,
Shyanne Parong
8089376663

Testimony

Jennie Hancock <mrshancock808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Esteemed Board,

I hope this finds you well, safely at home, physically distanced from those outside your family and conducting your business from the safety of the computer. I'm terrified that in a few short weeks I won't feel this same safety I'm feeling now, addressing you from my couch. I'm submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a public school teacher. I am a mom. I am a member of a medically fragile family. I am a person. I don't know which order of my roles garners the most empathy, but that seems to be lacking the most in the current incongruence between those of us teaching the children of Hawaii and those that tell us how we should be doing our job.

I want to do my job. I find great satisfaction in fulfilling that role, but I also cannot allow it to jeopardize all of me--of my family. I want to be back in the classroom teaching children, and I want to be there safely. As an elected member of the Board that accepted the agreement between the HSTA, DOE, and BOE, (another important role I fill) the most recent statements about less-than-6-foot distancing are the most concerning to me as a violation of not just the contractual agreement we made, but the health and safety of myself, my students, and our families.

Please do not allow carelessness and lax guidelines to define our reopening as the nation watches us succeed or fail on August 4. We agreed to terms in the MOU that I felt would best protect my son, my students, myself, my colleagues, and the community, because that is what the school represents. Ensure our communities' safety. Demand the agreement is followed, the CDC guidelines are followed, and then let us do our jobs.

Sincerely,

Jennie Hancock
HSTA Kona Chapter President
5th Grade Teacher, Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School
Public School Parent
Waikoloa, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My testimony

Denise Kaipo <denise.kaipo@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Denise Kaipo and I am an educator at Kea'au Elementary School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I believe that it is putting teachers, students and their family members at risk if we do not follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet of distancing, as well as adhering to the CDC's mask guidelines. This is not what we agreed upon and this endangers our entire community.

As a parent and a teacher, I have concerns about risking my own health and of my family members. My daughter and husband both have asthma and may be more at risk due to their sensitive respiratory conditions and there are so many risk factors that we are still facing. I really am afraid of sending my child to school and also having to teach FTF without having more deliberate guidelines put in place as the schools are reopened.

Thank you for your time in reading this,

Denise Kaipo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Chris Ayala <alikanwai75@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

TESTIMONY ON DOE- REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

To Whom It May Concern,

As a concern parent for it only my child but others as well, I am against the 3ft social distancing in classrooms. Are you guys really making decisions based on the health and well being of the students, teachers and staff. What about when they go out to recess, lunch etc? How do you expect to stop these children from interacting? Schools don't have enough staff to do so. And children will become aggravated especially those of young age. And for mask wearing, do you folks understand that this can be more harmful to an individual when breathing all that carbon dioxide out, into the mask and nowhere to go unless you remove your mask? How do you expect to control the 700 plus children to practice these things?

What happened to DOE has to see 4 weeks of no cases of COVID? And as of right now we have cases almost every day? I'm a parent who will protect my child and if you folks don't come to a better solution, I will not risk sending my child to school, where she might become vulnerable to getting sick.

So make your decisions based on the health and well being of our children, teachers and staff!

Mahalo,
A Concerned Parent

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY: Return to School

Sandra Bonk <sandra.bonk@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am writing to ask that you to all you can to see that the right things are in place to **protect all students and teachers** in our public schools from exposure to Covid-19. Due to the dramatic increase in cases on the mainland they are already talking about NOT going back to school as a looming possibility. We in Hawaii are also seeing an alarming increase of those testing positive with Covid-19. **Virtual learning may be one of our best options.**

Regarding a return to school: **I am a 70-year old female and obviously in the vulnerable group**. I love my students, love to teach and would prefer to continue, yet I am very worried about returning. Please try to resolve the following concerns for the safety of all.

1) Students in my classroom need to be **at least 6 feet apart in all directions**.

2) We all must wear **masks at all times inside and outside**…believe me I do not want to either!

3) I want my own **temperature-check device and permission to check each student's temperature** on the way in the door. Before the March break, I was required to keep an ill student in the classroom. The result: I was very sick that weekend and consequently I paid out-of-pocket to see if I had had Covid-19; my test was negative. **How to request a student exit must be very clear.**

4) A concerted effort could be made to **pursue virtual distance learning** and set students up for this style of schooling. Colleges are doing it now. We need to be sure our students have **reliable Internet.** I taught virtually this summer and loved it. Participation by students in reading and responding was wonderful. We could all hear and see each other and view and discuss each other's written work. The buy-in to each task was on target and focused. We would do well to prepare for this style of teaching now!

Thank you very much for reading this and seriously considering these requests. Please, be safe and well.

Sandra LKF Bonk
ELL/ELA
Keaau Middle School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony- 6' distance & mandatory masks

Linda Sobaje <linda.sobaje@mauihigh.org> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:50 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a high school classroom teacher.

Both my husband and I are over 60 years old. My husband is the primary caregiver for his 92 year old Mother. I am his only backup help. We only go out once a week for groceries, and have stayed at home since March.

In three weeks, I will return to school. I am not comfortable being closer than 6' (not 3') to students. I am also very worried about students who do not wear masks. This is the only protection I have. If I feel that the school is not safe, I will retire.

I want our students to be educated by certified teachers, and to do this, teachers need to feel safe returning to school.

Please make 6' distancing and mandatory facemasks required for everyone on all our school campuses.

--
Thanks!

Linda Sobaje
Math Teacher
Maui High School
linda.sobaje@mauihigh.org

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Darahlyn Agricula <darahlynmarie@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: "darahlynmarie@yahoo.com" <darahlynmarie@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:52 AM

Aloha! I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My name is Darahlyn Agricula, my children attend Waialua Elementary School. I feel that it is important to follow the CDC's guidelines. We all know how difficult it is to stop the spread of our common cold and flu within the classrooms. How will you guarantee that our children will be safe from Covid-19?

Mahalo,
Darahlyn Agricula

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

skiesandtrees <skiesandtrees@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

DO NOT ALLOW OUR KEIKI AND TEACHERS TO RISK THEIR LIVES. NOT WORTH IT.

-DOE TEACHER

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on the Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Andrew Giang and I am speaking as a teacher, as our School Community Council Chairperson, and as a member of the Wahiawa community. I teach at Wahiawa Middle School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the three feet distancing minimum is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. This guideline does not meet nor seems to be rooted in any credible public health guidelines, which all tout six feet as the minimum.

Moreover, our school will not be requiring students to wear masks inside the classroom, despite all public health guidelines nationally and locally. Instead, Wahiawa Middle plans to issue plexiglass shields only at teacher desks. This does nothing to address the issue of circulating airflow inside the classroom, nor does it take into account student or educator safety. Without masks, there is nothing to protect ourselves and each other from a possible spread of infection.

I understand that families are educating children on good hygiene and safe distancing, but such measures will be nearly impossible in a packed classroom without masks. What’s more, such lax recommendations put the onus of responsibility on children to make the right choice every moment of every day without much top-down support. As cases around the country continue to rise, it is a matter of when, not if, the pandemic will reach Hawai’i. We must be better prepared to meet that challenge than we are currently.

As a person that would fall into the high-risk category, I cannot and WILL NOT in good conscience return to the classroom without better public safety guidelines. I cannot in good conscience put myself, my colleagues, and my students at risk. When it comes to my colleagues and my students, there is no such thing as “acceptable losses”.

Please renegotiate and come up with school policies and recommendations that align with up-to-date public health and safety guidelines. This is unacceptable.

Sincerely,

Andrew Giang

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Distancing in the classroom

Lisa Nakamura <lisa.nakamura@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon,
My name is Lisa Nakamura and I have been a teacher for 23 years. I am currently teaching at Pauoa Elementary School.

We recently had a meeting with our Admin about the reopening of school. We learned that the state designated Pauoa as a Level 1 school, meaning we have the room capacity to have all students return in the Fall. We studied the various models and the closest model for us would be Model A, but we as a staff have MAJOR concerns.

Health and Safety:

1. Face shields and masks – It is my understanding that we cannot require students to wear their masks, but we can suggest or highly encourage. The CDC has said that the virus is thought to spread mainly person-to-person. Respiratory droplets of an infected person when they talk, cough, or sneeze can spread the virus. If mask wearing is supported and encouraged by the CDC, why can't we mandate this in our school?
2. Distance between students in the classroom – We were told that 3 ft between students with all students facing forward will be sufficient. We were told that we can fit 20 students in the classroom. Personally, this is my main concern.
    a. The CDC says 6ft. UH and Chaminade, and other colleges around the country are going with 6ft. Their students are adults who have better self-control. We have small children! How are we going to be sure that students face forward at all times?! How is it that we are being told to do HALF the distance?!
    b. The CDC says to stay at least 6ft apart from people who don't live in your household. I don't know how safe my students and their families have been during this time. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. Some of our families have been known to give their sick child medicine right before they come to school so that they can send their child to school without a fever, cough, or running nose. As soon as the child walks in the door, we can tell that they are not feeling well. 3 feet distancing in the classroom puts us all at risk.

Staffing:

1. Model A will only work if we are able to find and hire qualified PTTs to help with the overflow of students in each grade level. And this is with 3ft. This means we will need to hire at least 6 PTTs. Will there be enough? If many other schools are looking to hire PTTs, will there be a shortage? If we need to have 180 days of instruction, the PTTs that we hire cannot just be "babysitters."
2. Can funding be provided to hire more teachers for schools that are Level 1? The job lines would continue even after this health scare to keep our numbers in each classroom lower so that we can maintain health standards.
3. We should be maintaining 6ft of distance which may mean even more teachers and space is needed.

Having only 3ft of distance between students puts everyone at risk. I'm at risk which means I put my family at risk and my elderly parents at risk. Students are at risk which means they put their families at risk.

I am torn as I write this testimony. I know that it would be best for our students to come back to school, to be able to socialize with their friends, and to learn face-to-face. Our elementary age students, for the most part, did not do the best with online learning. I want what is best for our students. All teachers inherently want what is best for students; that is just the way we are built. What makes this so difficult is that although we want our kids in the classroom with us, we are being put in a very dangerous situation and we are being asked to compromise our health and well-being.

The shutdown of schools at the end of last school year really showed how important a role teachers play in the lives of students and families, and the economy. If students stay home, parents can't work. We will do what is necessary to educate our kids. But I am not willing to risk my health, the health of my family, and the health of my students and their families.

We need to look at what is happening across the nation and learn from that. Florida, Texas, and other states that are not following social distancing and mask wearing, look at what is happening there.

Teachers have been called upon to sacrifice so much. During my teaching career, I've experienced a teacher strike, teacher furloughs, numerous contract negotiations where teachers got the short end of the stick, and most recently only certain teachers getting paid stipends when many other teachers (dual certified teachers who take on the brunt of responsibilities, but that is another story) deserve the stipend. It is hard not to feel that teachers are taken for granted and are not appreciated. In the end, everyone knows that teachers will sacrifice so that our students won't have to. But when it comes down to it, I am not willing to risk my life.

Please take teachers' and students' health and safety into consideration and require at least 6ft of distancing between desks in the classroom.

Thank you for your time,
Lisa Nakamura
Pauoa Elementary School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Adriane Custer <adriane.custer@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:07 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Please read and consider the following testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. I am writing as a parent of three students at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School. My children are entering grades 4, 6, and 8. I am writing on behalf of them because they do not have a voice in the decisions you are making regarding their safety this upcoming school year.

I am past disappointment and concern with Superintendent Kishimoto's recommendation to allow only three feet of distance between students. I have moved on to anger. This flagrant disregard of our keiki's safety exemplifies how our students are no longer the priority. Public education is based on the premise that all children have a right to free, appropriate, safe, effective education. This is three foot social distancing is unacceptable.

According to the CDC, a distance of at least six feet is advised. This is an organization that has done extensive research on this pandemic. This is their expertise. Those in education have studied education. We need both epidemiologists and educators in society. Just as I do not trust Dr. Fauci to educate my children, I do not trust Superintendent Kishimoto with their health.

Please insist upon at least a six foot distance between students, teachers, and faculty.

Thank you,
Adriane Custer

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kelli Bolger <kelli.bolger@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

I am a classroom teacher at Kua O Ka Lā. One of my children attends Kua O Ka Lā and the other is at Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science.

I am seriously concerned about HIDOE's position that students can be safe in a classroom with less than 6 feet of distance between individuals.

This does not in any way reflect the realities of children in a classroom full of friends and peers. Students move and shout and reach and turn - they are never sitting still, facing one direction without turning to speak to those nearby. 3 feet is not enough to minimize overlap of physical space and cross-contamination. 6 feet is widely recognized and recommended by experts as the amount of space needed to minimize spread, why would HIDOE suggest otherwise?

The HIDOE needs to explain why social distancing is taken more seriously at the grocery store than in our schools. If I don't feel that my employer will follow national recommendations in order to keep people safe, I will need to reconsider my plans for the future.

Mahalo,
Kelli Bolger

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Trever Veilleux <tveilleux@haaspcs.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,
My name is Trever Veilleux and I am a teacher at the Hawaii Academy of Arts and Science in Pahoa, HI.
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

For the safety of my students, their families and my own family, I implore the DOE to be firm and consistent in their guidance that we will practice physical distancing of six feet whenever possible, even in the classroom

Thank you,

Trever Veilleux
HAAS Math and Music
tveilleux@haaspcs.net
808-965-3730

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year

Shane <masa5758@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony - Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year

Name - Shane Arakaki
School - Moanalua Elementary School

I am writing in response to the DOE's response to COVID and their lack of insight in their decision making for the upcoming school year. The numbers show the truth...the cases are on the rise. Since cities and states around the country open up their businesses, the cases have been on the rise and areas have had to shut back down. The DOE thinks that 3ft distance between students is "enough". We have 6ft requirements at stores yet they think that it's ok for youth to sit so closely with no masks. And even with masks, elementary school kids will not have the discipline to keep clean. I ask that the BOE and DOE come up with a different plan. 6ft is a minimum! Why not offer families with access to electronic devices and internet remote learning like we've been doing for the past few months? Stream live classes and allow those that have full remote access to tele-educate. This would reduce the amount of in class space required. Many families in Hawaii have kupuna living with us. Children bring home colds/flus on a normal basis. With Covid, that can't happen! How can UH have stricter guidelines that our youth educators?!

Please, listen to the mass and make changes. 6ft distancing is a minimum. Allow tele-education.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Social Distancing in HIDOE schools

Anne Weber <aweb3388@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a former DOE educator from Ma'ili Elementary who wanted to voice my concern over the 3 foot distance requirement in public schools in Hawaii (Discussion Item VI(A)). As a former educator without children, I can still foresee the medical strain this policy will put on the community at large beyond just students, educators, and parents. Schools have the potential to create super clusters that have impact beyond school grounds. When students and teachers get sick, parents stay home from work, families in multi-generational households get sick, and any stability we were able to salvage during the months of social distancing will be reversed and multiplied.

Requiring less space than a gas station or a supermarket when students spend extended periods in classrooms goes against the recommendations of public health experts. If the justification of increased health risk is that students are resilient and this will prevent loss of learning, this is a simplistic view that ignores Maslow's hierarchy of needs. When students don't feel safe and physically healthy, no learning can take place. It will definitely be difficult to readjust the way we educate students but this can also be seen as an opportunity to make real student centered changes in education. Smaller class sizes, more innovative methods of content delivery, and more individualized learning opportunities are possible through this crisis.

Sincerely,
--
Anne Weber
808.492.2150

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Cindy <cindy.l.fong@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Cindy <cindy.l.fong@gmail.com>

Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school Year

Cynthia L. Fong, Teacher at Hilo Intermediate School, Hilo, Hawaii
July 6, 2020

Dear BOE Members,

I am very concerned about the HIDOE recommending, suggesting, or allowing for for 3 ft minimum physical distancing and making it optional to wear masks while students are in school. As an educator, I'm at higher risk if I catch this virus (specifically breathing concerns) and bringing it home to pass on to my family members - NOT ACCEPTABLE.

There are various documents out there from educational experts on re-opening schools and things to consider. There are many webnairs as well. I've read a lot of opinions, I've watched a variety of videos, have discussions and I will continue to do so, so I can assist as a school level leader to provide guidance and assistance with my administrators and colleagues so we all are part of the solution; not the problem.

I am carefully watching what goes on. I've taken a volunteer leadership role over the summer to help our school open up safely. ***But if push comes to shove and the risk is too great, I am prepared to quit or take time off of my teaching job.*** Which means I will be contributing to a continued teacher shortage, which will be sad and not what I want to do. But my health comes first and being seriously ill or dead is not useful to anyone in my community.

I'm in a position that it will be difficult to find someone competent to replace me that's willing to come in and teach. Fortunately, I have the luxury to quit or take time off without pay as I do have 2 jobs and I am prepared to move for my and my family's health. But I **LOVE** my teaching job (it's more than a career for me and my passion for what I teach has positively affected students in my care).

Some HIDOE recommendations runs counter to the signed HSTA MOU. HSTA regularly asked early to sit down with the HIDOE to come up with a collaborative plan (which did not happen until the last minute) and which appeared to be pushed on this by the BOE's directive of needing a plan of what is going on. Thank you for doing so and please, read their recommendations carefully, especially the fine print.

I feel the HIDOE administration and Hawaii DOH have been waffling and unable to come up with decision based on scientific facts and instead, feel good situations to placate naysayers (many whom change their tune when they get sick). NOT OK. I'm not willing to continue to allow our state or country to sacrifice our community members and economy without benefit - that means reducing the spread of this virus. It will take all of us to manage this crisis of which are unprecedented.

For my part, I have personally made masks, given them away; I wear a mask in public at all times; I've canceled any vacations and have stayed home; I don't go to parties: I don't go out except when I need to; and I work from home. We have a very understaffed fragile medical system in which it is stressed pre-pandemic (try getting a doctor on an outer island - good luck) and we have a teacher shortage in our school system.

This pandemic will stress it beyond reasonable means if we allow these actions to proceed because our virus case loads will increase. We already know that a majority of our students have lost out on their learning but we don't have to make it worse by another shutdown. We don't really know all the effects this has on people: who it is mild for, who it is not, transmission etc. Our medical infrastructure is very limited and fragile (look at NYC with their excellent hospitals and they were over-burdened).

In countries where they were very diligent with mask wearing, stay at home and contact tracing, they have flattened the viral load allowing their economies to start reopening. The US has not due to poor leadership, poor funding of public

health and education. But as a community, we don't have to follow the poor national leadership but instead, look at what will serve us best and keep us safe as much as is possible at this time.

As a state, community members willingly or were forced to give up their jobs (income!), economy etc for the greater good. Let's not bungle that up by ignoring it now. Our least secure community members are suffering the most and we need to be sure safeguards in place. We need to open the schools because there is no way our economy can return. Further, if we don't have some economy, we will loose students and families as they move away or die. I get it. But we can put safeguards in to minimize risks so these things can happen. It will be cumbersome, it will cost more. But I believe we can do it.

Schools are the largest child care providers in the nation. Accept this fact. I'm not happy that the HIDOE states when asked what to do about employees with children and they ignore it by saying that is a childcare issue. It is and schools are a big part of that childcare situation, whether they believe it or not. Fortunately, my children are now young adults, so I can rest easier but I will be supporting my colleagues whom have children, where I can. But many of my colleagues are not in that situation. Without schools in session, there is no reasonable hope of improved economy and it's wrong to ignore childcare issues are part of our remedies. Parents cannot go to work if they do not know if their child is safe.

We therefore, owe it to our students, parents/families, faculty and staff members to keep everyone as safe as possible during this pandemic. We need to consider the welfare of our families and employees children - where will they be if they are working? The US let up it's guard, we are on a no-entry to the European Union (how embarrassing) and there is a very large focal group of naysayers and personal rights folks that oppose these methods. The mainland US is getting astronomical rates of infection every day - it's scary. But what about everyone else's right to live a healthy long life without having to be subjected to a virus when it can be prevented?

As it is, we will attain herd immunity. I would prefer it via a vaccine (time is needed) versus getting sick. The latter requires all of us to do our part.

Concerns with the HIDOE recommendations:

1. **Defies scientific experts guidance of minimum 6 ft distancing** (CDC guidelines). (Does not say facing each other, back to back. 6 feet distance as a circle! It's bogus to say, 3 feet if they are all facing forward. Guess what, viruses can still travel in a sneeze and masks are leaky.)

2. **Wearing a mask/face shield** as constantly reminded on local/national media, civil defense announcements, state and county proclamations etc. Why does the HIDOE want to give a different message from the one being publicized?

3. We realize it will be an impossible task to enforce 100% but if it is optional, it's becomes a bigger problem of getting everyone to comply.

4. Viruses don't choose and there are many non-asymptomatic people out there who will spread unknowingly. Countries (NOT the US) who were diligent in their efforts of social/physical distancing have gotten good results (S. Korea).

5. **Violates written/signed HSTA MOU.** We all need written guidance and it does not have to happen alone, but the HIDOE seems to have taken that direction and basically letting every school be on their own. This is poor leadership and it's really late coming out in that school starts in less than a month.

I humbly ask,

1. **Minimum of 6 ft physical distancing** where possible

2. **Require everyone must wear a mask or face shield** (or be distance learning if too uncomfortable), be sure

3. **Adequate ventilation in every area** (if that means purchasing extra fans or reimbursing teachers who purchase their own. This virus can hover in the air and be inhaled causing an infection).

4. Continue focus on vulnerable population - but also remember and consider everyone.

5. Find ways that students get fed every single day - whether on campus or not. A hungry or starving kid cannot learn.

6. HIDOE proposed paying for online distance learning for core subject - please definitely allow it. We'll figure out an attendance schedule. I'm sure we will have teachers who can work online to assist/monitor and avoid being in a higher risk infection situation.

7. Look at the schedules - is there a way we could get all the students in everyday? Our school looked at it. The faculty had a very rich discussion regarding the schedules and we came up with something that is workable but not perfect based on the models - but our students move around to different classes - far different from elementary. Some things cannot be done without guidance and funding. Generally, our facilities are too small to allow for the 6 ft distancing with the entire population, but what about alternating morning and afternoon hours of groups? It's really hard at the secondary level and some enticements need to be made for shift working with our collective HSTA bargaining unit. It can't happen if we don't talk and collaborate.

8. Allow for tele-working/distance learning if possible, especially for our super high risk faculty/staff and students.

9. Be sure to allow for flexibility when things go south or improve. These are times we all need to be nimble on our feet and how we view things.

Thank you for reading these concerns and views and I trust you will make the best decisions to aid our Hawaii educating community and the students/families they serve.

Always,

Cynthia L. Fong
Hilo, Hawaii

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Adriane Custer <adriane.custer@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Please read and consider the following testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am writing as a proud educator at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School. I am an eight grade English teacher with grave concern for my students and myself.

Superintendent Kishimoto's recommendation to allow only three feet of distance between students puts us all in danger. Regardless of which way the students are facing, a mere three feet distance is not sufficient to stop the spread of COVID-19. I trust educators' recommendations on best teaching practices, but I do not trust them with the health and safety of my students. I trust doctors and medically trained personnel and groups with medical recommendations. To take the advice of the Superintendent over the Center of Disease Control would be irresponsible and apathetic toward the lives of our students and teachers. Public education is based on the premise that all children have a right to free, appropriate, safe, effective education. Keiki should not need to put themselves in danger just to take advantage of an education.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, M.D., NAID Director recommends a minimum of six feet social distancing. We follow this recommendation at Target, in churches, even in Costco. I am at a loss at the idea that this not be applicable in schools. By disregarding the bare minimum we are putting our entire communities at risk.

I implore you to mandate at least a six foot social distancing space in our schools.

Thank you,
Adriane Custer
Teacher
Waikoloa Middle School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Heidi Veilleux <heidirvx@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Heidi Veilleux and I am a teacher at the Hawaii Academy of Arts and Science in Pahoa, HI.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday: "Schools and worksites shall wo arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

For the safety of my students, their families and my own family, I implore the DOE to be firm and consistent in their guidance that we will practice physical distancing of six feet whenever possible, even in the

Thank you,

--
Heidi Veilleux
HC 2 Box 5784
16-1711 42nd Avenue
Keaau, HI 96749
(808) 217-5369
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heidirvx@gmail.com
lehuamoonheidi@gmail.com

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

A parent and teacher and kupuna

Nalani Haunga <nalanihgc@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony
I am concerned about the social distancing and mask and strongly agree that we need to keep it at 6ft and mandatory mask at all times to ensure safety of all of us students faculty and staff.

Thanks!
Nalani

Dear Chairperson Payne and Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Alan Isbell. I retired a year ago after more than a decade of teaching fourth-grade students at Wailuku Elementary School on Maui. I write to implore you to reconsider your dangerously flawed plan to reopen.

Having served as past Maui Chapter president for Hawaii State Teachers Association, I have heard from many working teachers about their concerns over the plan, particularly in regard to to the restricted social distancing and lack of a face mask requirement. A disturbing number of them are considering an exit from the DOE as a result.

Having joined HSTA-R, many members share the same concerns. That should be particularly concerning to you.

I was considering working as a substitute teacher this year, knowing full well how desperately short the public schools are of qualified substitute teachers. However, upon learning of the plans' provisions regarding three-foot distancing and optional face masks, I quickly dispensed with the idea of substituting. I am not alone in my concerns among retired teachers here.

Retired teachers have long been the source of the most truly qualified substitute teachers. And if age is the prevailing reason for retirement, it stands to reason that retirees would be among the most vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. So, implementation of this plan as written very well could end up in a double whammy for the public schools: More teachers leaving, fewer substitutes to replace them.

Most teachers have entered their profession for the most noble and honorable reasons, seeking to make a lasting difference in the world and its children, but not at the cost of their health, perhaps of their lives. It is not a tough decision. Most will opt for survival.

Our keiki deserve better.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Alan Isbell
Wailuku

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shelby Stern <shelby.desilva@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Shelby Stern and I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I teach 4th grade at Pohakea Elementary School in Ewa Beach and while I absolutely love my job, what I do, and the kids I work with, I feel that the 3 feet distancing requirement that the BOE is allowing in classrooms puts myself, my students, and their families at risk- making it completely unsafe.

We are asked to maintain 6 foot distances in EVERY other setting besides the classroom, so I am unclear as to why this was deemed safe for schools. During a regular school year where COVID-19 was not a concern, the common cold and the flu spreads like wildfire. If we are going to allow students to resume an almost normal routine in the classroom with their 3ft distancing, I can assure you that we will see a huge influx in COVID-19 cases and deaths. I personally am not willing to die for my job. I have a family that depends on me and who would struggle immensely without me. I can assure you that some of my students are in the same boat. They are at risk of contracting the disease at school and bringing it home, causing them to infect their family members, many of which are older, not to mention that I teach in a low income area of Oahu, meaning that our families may not have the adequate access to the medical attention that they would need.

Quite honestly, the BOE is acting frivilously and rashly in regards to the 3ft distancing guidelines. It is strikingly clear that teachers, students, and the community at large are of no concern to the BOE at this point, especially as this decision goes against the 6ft that the CDC recommends. Teachers are already putting ourselves at risk by just returning to the classroom but to make matters worse the BOE is allowing some very unsafe practices for the classroom setting. Something is very wrong with this picture.

I am asking that the BOE reconsider their stance on the 3ft distancing guideline and that they keep the safety of their teachers and students at the forefront of their minds when making these decisions.

Shelby Stern
Grade 4 Teacher
Pohakea Elementary
Ewa Beach, O'ahu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kelly Balles <kellyballes@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We are testifying on discussion item VI (A): Presentation on the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening school plan for the 2020- 2021 school year.

Our names are Michael and Kelly Balles and we are Kupuna with a grandson who will be starting kindergarten at Moanalua Elementary School. As Kupuna, we feel strongly that the students must maintain the 6 foot distance as recommended by the CDC. HSTA advocated and agreed-upon that the schools would work to minimize the risk of COVID 19 by maintaining a 6 foot separation between and among students and staff.

As with many families in Hawaii, our grandchildren live with their Kupuna and not maintaining a 6 foot distance in a classroom risks bringing home the COVID-19 and affecting those in the household.

We strongly support and advocate that the DOE must maintain a 6 foot distance in the classroom to protect the children, the teachers and the families.

Thank you.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony re: Safe social distancing in classrooms

Anna Crawford <annabcrawford@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:41 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Anna Crawford and I am a French teacher at King Kekaulike High School, Maui. I am writing in response to the Department of Education's announcement that schools could reopen with students no more than 3 feet apart.

I would first like to state that this violates the Memorandum of Understanding between the DOE and the Hawaii State Teachers Association. This was signed into the memorandum in order to ensure that schools did whatever they can to protect the safety and health of students, teachers, and families.

I teach in a portable classroom which are often smaller than regular classrooms. Any teacher knows that even with the 6 foot distance between students, separation at all times will be difficult to maintain. By reducing that space to 3 feet, the DOE is making it more difficult for teachers to keep our Keiki safe. This will likely also increase the number of students assigned to each classroom, increasing the risk of exposure to more students, teachers, and families. I have concerns about my ability to monitor all student behavior to ensure safe distances, and I teach at the high school level. I cannot imagine the concern going through the minds of my colleagues who teach elementary.

There are a host of issues that I have with the current re-opening plan, including the use of the word should when referring to wearing masks. Cleaning of classrooms will only be provided once a day, not after each group of students. I could go on for days about all of the issues I have; the concern of this letter relates to the fact that the DOE has already violated the MOU in their first press conference after it was signed. If they are willing to publicly state that they are OK in reducing the amount of space between students, I do not want to see what other protections they are willing to sacrifice on behalf of the students, the teachers, and the families of Hawai'i.

I write this letter as a teacher who is considered in the high-risk category. I have Chronic Pulmonary Disease (COPD).I have no idea what this virus might do to me if I were to contract it; I do not want to find out. I don't want to use up all my sick leave to avoid catching this scary virus.This scenario has made me seriously question whether or not I would be willing to teach in Hawai'i, and I am in my 20th year with the DOE. And I know many teachers are currently having this discussion with their families.

I implore you to consider the safety and well-being of the students, the teachers, and the families of Hawai'i. The DOE has put our administrators, staff, and teachers in a horrible position to re-open the schools without the support they need. How can we ensure that we can keep our campus truly safe for our students, our teachers, and our families? I have worked for the department for 20 years, and I understand how many times we have picked up the slack for things the DOE cannot afford and cannot provide.

Enough is enough. This is not policy and it's not budget; we are not in a scenario in which the burden Will be placed on the backs of teachers and students. You need to ensure our safety.

I implore you to hold the DOE responsible and accountable for the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and families.

Mahalo for your time.

Anna Crawford
King Kekaulike High School

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Kathryn Alba <kathryn_alba@kahaluu.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,
My name is Kathryn Alba and I am a teacher at Kahaluu Elementary School. I am extremely concerned about the recent announcement about three-foot policy. I currently teach at a title one school which predominantly services housing families. This is the fourth year I've been at this school and I can personally attest that families have sent sick children to school. Last year, for two weeks I had 4 students out with the flu, 3 of the 4 came to school with symptoms (high fever and vomiting) before being sent home. Other teachers from other classes had also reported a high amount of absences due to kids coming to school with flu-like symptoms before realizing that they were sick. I foresee this being a HUGE issue at my school and many other schools that service high percentage of low income families. Mind you these were 6th graders. This year I will be with 3rd graders, and this scares me even more, because these young minds will not know better. When asked if their parents knew they were sick, they all responded with yes. Looking at the increase of cases this past week, how can you tell me that we as teachers will be safe with a three-foot policy in place when we had issues like this last year?

I can't seem to understand the logistics for this policy. What other company is putting a three foot policy in place? Adults can't even follow a six-foot policy or "don't come to work if you show symptoms" (look at the Hawaiian Airline trainers or the BUS driver), how do you expect CHILDREN to maintain a safe distance with just three feet? It's just absolutely unreasonable.

Please explain to me the logic as to why colleges are implementing a six foot policy for adults for health and safety reasons, and yet school-aged children are given half the distance? Is it because children can "recover better" than adults? Hawaii schools are hardly doing anything to protect the community from spread of COVID as well as to protect the staff and adults on campus. All the other schools who have opened up REQUIRE face masks for all, implement a 6 foot policy, temperature checks/swab testing, and/or student face shields or desk barriers (https://abcnews.go.com/International/schools-world-reopening-coronavirus-pandemic/story?id=70641371) .More needs to be done if you want to ensure a smooth running school year with minimal disruptions and few to no law suits.

Do you understand the message you are sending to all teachers by making this three-foot policy? The message being received currently is that teachers are expendable!!! This has and will drive the moral down so low that you may not be able to convince us to come back to work. WE are definitely here to support the community and helping families get back to work but it is with the understanding that we are doing it SAFELY and currently we are not feeling safe with such policy. Look at the nurses who weren't given the correct supplies and implemented safe policy and procedures when the pandemic first hit. Some quit and some sued. Remember, there isn't a shortage of nurses.

I also have a 6 year old that will be attending public school. This scares me as my son is very active and has difficultly sitting still in his seat, like many other boys his age. Three-feet is not going to to anything for them. He constantly plays with his mask and doesn't always wear it properly (needs constant reminders) so having six feet is essential to keeping him safe as well as others. Remember he is going to be in a room with as many as 19-22 other families. Our family has no idea nor control on how well these other families practice social distancing. Therefore the risk of community-spread disease is super high in schools. Especially now that a lot of places are opening up, families are putting their guards down when it comes to social distancing. We need to be stricter about enforcing social distancing at school because this is one of the few things we can control to limit the spread of this disease. **I implore you to go to a public school (title one school) and sit in a classroom with 20+ kids and see how comfortable you would be sitting three feet away from another child. Know what it's like to teach in such conditions as you are making policies and procedures you "think" will work.** This would give you perspective as to what you are doing to teachers.You really need to put yourself in our shoes before making such policies. See it from our prospective for once.

The state has to do more and unfortunately spend more if they want schools to stay open SAFELY. Schools are need in order for parents to work. Sometimes we have to go slow in order to go fast. This is definitely the time to go slow. I beg you to implement a six-foot policy and require ALL students to wear masks while in school. Should the numbers of new cases drop then we can think about adjusting the requirements but right now is NOT THE TIME to do this.

Kathryn Alba
Kathryn_Alba@kahaluu.k12.hi.us
work: 239-3100 or 305-6346

Kahalu'u Elementary School
47-280 Waihee Rd.
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - July 6, 2020

A M <a.m133734@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:46 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Chairperson Payne and the Board of Education Members:

I am a teacher at an Elementary School in Pearl City. I am excited to go back to school and help students get back to a “new” norm, but I do have concerns. I do not like the way the schools are given so much flexibility in opening the schools. I think there needs to be stricter guidelines to follow. My principal always finds loop holes to do things her way which is never the best way to do things. For example, she runs smaller class sizes for the upper grades (i.e., 15-19 students) and larger classes in the lower grades (i.e., 22-27) due to testing for the last 6-10 years. During this time, if she just shifts that model since we were TOLD it is state mandated that K-2 has to come everyday, all day, the 6 feet rule could work. Therefore, currently, upper grades will be running a rotational schedule having only 7-9 students a day while she is planning to fit 22+ students in the class for the lower grades and yet has no plan for the students that cannot fit in the room after the 6 feet distancing. She says a PPT will pull out the extras for half a day and don’t know what’s going to happen the other half of the day. This becomes a fair and equity education for all and a discriminatory issue because of how she will choose the kids to be removed. I agree K-2 should come everyday. I have tried distance learning with my students in the spring and it was difficult. Most students are unable to focus; however, a plan needs to be made. While one solution is to shift personnel within the school to help the lower grades, she could also give us some money to get barriers for the students and space them closer. At this time there is no support at the school level from administrators who are not directly in the class.

The CAS also needs to work closer with his principals and monitor their plan. Many of the schools can make this work but refuse to make drastic changes that could just be temporary but we all need to work together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Holly Mizuno <hollymizuno@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Holly Mizuno <hollymizuno@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:47 PM

Name: Holly Sumida (3rd Grade Teacher)
Workplace: Connections PCS
School where my Children Attend: Waiakea Elementary School

Aloha,
How would you feel if you walked into the grocery store or doctor's office and you saw people sitting 3 feet apart and not wearing masks? I am testifying against the following: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As an educator and parent, I am against many issues related to the reopening of schools plan. Masks should not be an option in the classrooms, desks should be 6 feet apart, temperature checks should be required, and online learning throughout the entire year should be an option for schools. I have informed my children about the preventatives of the coronavirus, and when I informed them about these matters, they told me they did not want to go to school. I'm sure these issues have given them more anxiety when informed they will be given the option of students not wearing masks in the classroom, and may sit 3 feet away from their peers. Sure, this new norm may be hard for everyone, but it will take time to get used to. We should be willing to take the time to prevent this virus from spreading and do everything at all costs. We don't know enough about the virus by simply just making decisions that are feasible for education to work. There are other options.

There needs to be stricter measures taken for our keiki. As you know, the social distancing requirements help stop the spread of this virus. Yes, we do not have the facilities to support all of our keiki, but there are measures that can be in place in order for the virus not to spread. If you allow schools to have this flexibility of not wearing masks, and desks placed feet apart for example , there will be schools that support this and the results may be catastrophic. Do we really need to take that risk? These measures are temporary, however it could be permanent if we don't take stricter actions.

I understand that there's less risk in contracting the virus if students are facing the same way while sitting 3 feet apart; however, it is very possible that students will face a different direction and transmit germs by coughing or sneezing. Therefore, teachers and aides should wear masks to prevent the spread, as well as students.

According to a news website, masks can prevent the spread of the virus by 75 percent.
https://www.google.com/amp/s/fox6now.com/2020/05/20/wearing-a-face-mask-can-reduce-coronavirus-transmission-by-up-to-75-percent-study-says/amp/

I understand that students will be in their own bubble of the classroom; however, we don't know who they have contacted outside of the classroom.

The plan for reopening schools in Hawai'i is irresponsible and cannot be tolerated. I know working families will have a hard time with childcare, but this change in the education system will not be permanent. Stricter measures need to be in place at schools for now. The number of coronavirus cases are low, but we need to keep it that way. Thank you for your attention.

Mahalo,
Holly Sumida

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Fw: Testimony (July 9) addendum

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:55 PM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!

We would like to add one more resource re: diagnostic testing at the start of the school year.

https://luvellebrown.com/ (award-winning national Superintendent from Ithaca, New York)
Podcast: Starts at 5:47, mentions diagnostic testing at 6:29

If Podcast is not available there, its source: So What's School Going To Look Like In The Fall?

So What's School Going To Look Like In The Fall?

As the disrupted school year winds down, educators, parents and students look toward an uncertain fall.

To summarize our testimony, we ask that the HIDOE remove the mandate of any kind of testing within the first two weeks of school. We are okay with pushing it back to later in the school year, or replace them with assessment tasks within refocused lessons designed by teachers with time to collaborate.

Mahalo,
Keith and Patricia Ishihara

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020, 08:30:00 AM HST
Subject: Testimony (July 9)

Aloha!

We are both public school teachers with over 50 years of experience between us.

This message has two points:

1. HIDOE's 3-feet distancing recommendations
2. Early assessment (i.e., diagnostic testing)

Regarding Point #1: Being 3 feet apart and all facing forward goes against the CDC guidelines ("recommends that schools space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible to reduce risk. The CDC characterizes students who are 'not spaced apart' as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19"). It doesn't matter which direction you face. The droplets from speaking, coughing, sneezing, etc. even with a covering can reach 3 feet all around. Please keep it at 6 feet apart (and even then, it's questionable). We also have concern for all students' well being, including our son who attends Moanalua Middle School.

Regarding Point #2: The HIDOE Return to Learn: Principal's Handbook (http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%202.pdf) mentions, starting on Page 16 ("Learning Assessments") that all schools must assess their students within the first two weeks of school.

Shouldn't the focus of opening schools be for students' and teachers' well-being (health and wellness)? What will students think when they must take a test? The focus should be on well-being, SEL, and refocusing lessons and assessment tasks **within** the learning (as well as adequate and thorough planning for distance learning). There will be learning trauma if we don't focus on welcoming students back into a safe and nurturing environment, and instead barrage them with tests. An alternative would be to do smaller assessment tasks within the learning. With altered bell schedules, teachers will probably see their students less often than usual; that time is valuable, better spent with instruction and formative tasks rather than diagnostic testing. Performance data is ***not*** the most important thing right now.

Here are some references against giving assessments at the start of the school year. Most are more focused on Mathematics, but the basic principles apply to all content areas.

- https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/teaching-supervising-assessment-beyond.pdf (Pages 14-15)
- https://mc2.nmsu.edu/files/2020/06/NCTM_NCSM_Moving_Forward.pdf (Page 7)
- https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/ (in section "Behavioral Health/Emotional Support for Children and Adolescents")
- https://achievethecore.org/page/3267/2020-21-priority-instructional-content-in-english-language-arts-literacy-and-mathematics (PDF; Pages 11-12)
- https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf (Page 7)
- https://buildingmathematicians.wordpress.com/2020/05/21/how-not-to-start-math-class-in-the-fall-2020/

We ask that you consider these issues for the sake of our students and teachers. Please empathize with them.

Mahalo,

Keith Ishihara
Math Teacher
Waipahu Intermediate School

Patricia Ishihara
HIDOE Mathematics Resource Teacher
Office of Curriculum and Instruction Design (OCID)

Testimony

Dayva Summer <dayvasummer@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Dayva Escobar and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. My father is a Social Studies teacher at Waiakea High School in Hilo, whom has taught there for almost three decades, and I am a former alumni. As both a concerned community member and a daughter of an immunocompromised teacher, I am deeply concerned for the wellbeing of my father, former teachers, and the students who are soon to be returning to their respective classrooms at Waiakea High School as well as at schools reopening across the state.

I find it highly unethical that the DOE is compromising the physical wellbeing of our teachers and students by allowing them to return to school. Not only that, but with the meager protocol of a 3 ft separation, at all times, which is likely due in part to our shortage of teachers that make us incapable of decreasing class sizes with further distancing. Will 3 ft protect students from breathing the same air in a small square room? What about the papers that must be passed out to students? The room fans that keep them cool, which serve to only further circulate this air?

Students are “not required” to wear a mask as it is their right to choose, however, is it the student’s right to *choose* to endanger *other* lives, regardless of their own perceived threat of the virus, regardless of whether or not they care about their fellow students lives, are engaging in notorious angst bred defiance, or are simply acting out naively with potentially grave consequences. If students are not following health protocol, which we know will occur to a certain degree, how can it be effectively implemented? Do we care?

It’s easy to disregard the threat of this pandemic when we are not geographically being effected in numbers as bountiful as other regions of the country, but does that mean we should take the risk, be the test subjects that endanger loved ones? I also note that schools will be cycling on a Monday-Thursday schedule, with Friday’s off. Are our student’s immune on those days but not on Fridays or is this a clever way to pay teachers less while expecting more of them?

I fear that we are naively acting out of convenience instead of true welfare, and if we have the capacity to pursue a distanced compromise until it is safe, shouldn’t that be the first choice? While we inevitably want to return to normalcy, normalcy is a privilege that comes when things *are* normal. Right now, things are not. How can we expect to return to normalcy if we continue to perpetuate the same behavior that can prolong our lack thereof?

While short term consequences may seem bleak, aren’t the long term consequences even more so?

Many of our local teachers are of older age, and thus immunocompromised, should we put them at further risk? My dad, though he does not want to admit his perceived weakness, is immunocompromised by a previous pulmonary embolism/clotting disorder, should we be allowing teachers like him, who don’t want to be singled out, to be taken advantage of? Is that ethics or is that corruption?

I also note that researchers have been quantifying the loss attained by furthering distanced learning as one that is posed cognitively: pushing students behind in their grade that is determined by our test scores. What about distanced academic support? Will these test scores really matter if we may potentially lose the students who take them. Potential low test scores or potential low blood work? Are test scores more important than wellbeing? Are they the true determinative of a students intelligence? Is a students ability to focus on an online program really that much different from one's ability to focus in class? As a student and a daughter of a teacher, I can assure you that the differences are negligible; a student is either determined or they are not.

While I also know child care is an issue for many, I can only imagine that assured wellbeing of one's child is a first priority. Teachers are educators, not babysitters, and childcare should not be a primary prerogative for returning to classrooms. The DOE should also be holding that same rational while looking further into means of compromise, rather than throwing everyone overboard with the hope that all continue to swim.

It saddens me that we live in a society where we must either choose the wellbeing of our community or our economy. There is *always* a compromise that can keep us moving forward, while also preventing us from moving backwards. Health and finance should not be an either or, a Russian roulette, that either inhibits or prohibits our capacity to thrive collectively.

I sincerely hope you will consider this testimony with a heavy heart, and take deeply into consideration the potential repercussions the decision to open schools may have on our students, teachers, and the community.

Mahalo for your time,
Dayva Escobar

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jaclyn Wiils <jaclyn_96792@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Jaclyn Wills, Makaha Elementary , preschool sped..... How I love teaching special education preschool! I do not however, want to die doing it! Can my family or the families of my students sue the state because of putting us in a dangerous situation should we contract Covid 19? Schools should reopen when it is safe for all! Why is the 3 feet rule okay For the little ones, When the cdc and the rest of society abides by the 6ft distancing? I invite you to come and stay for a day in our classrooms .... I bet you cringe at the thought! Think of all of us on the frontlines and the exposure to Covid it presents.....
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Chen <jenniferchen808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Attention BOE:

I just sent a testimony yesterday regarding face masks on all DOE employees especially teachers. Face MASKS should be mandatory for ALL teachers in EVERY grade level. Lo and behold , in today's news it was reported that CDC recommends that face shield should NOT be a substitution for face masks.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html

"It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

In today's local news
https://www.king5.com/mobile/article/news/verify/verify-are-face-shields-a-good-alternative-to-masks/283-2e732a98-45c2-4247-a1a8-c7ead616a333

There is not enough proof that face shields protect others from getting the airborne virus even though the person wearing the shield may be protected. Shields are not tightly fitted around the face to prevent viral particles from spreading.

ALL employees need to be mandated to wear face MASKS. Face shields should be an option for each employee to wear with the mandatory face mask.

We need to be proactive in keeping children, their families, teachers and the community safe and healthy. Flatten that curve!

Thank you,
Jennifer Chen

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rosie Dobbs <rosiedobbs@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on behalf of the VI(A). 3 ft is not safe!
My name is Anita Kelley and I teach at a Mililani High School. My daughter attends Waena Elementary.
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Miriam Mata <mili.mata@outlook.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:17 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

I do not believe we are prepared for the complete reopening our schools. I feel like we are rushing or being rushed to "be the first state in the nation to return to classrooms." Once again, Hawaii is being used as the guinea pig. And with the out of state travel ban being lifted on August 1st, while other states are still NOT opening their campuses, it's likely that mainland families will take that time to come to our islands for their late "summer vacay." Even with Hawaii's COVID testing requirement there is no guarantee that it will work 100 percent of the time because of the 14 day incubation period of the virus.

We have sacrificed so much already and have taken the necessary measures to keep the spread of COVID 19 relatively low on Kaua'i, it's reckless and irresponsible to open up our school campuses at the same time that we open the flood gates to tourism. It will only be a matter of time before we are placed on lock down and go back to square one.

Most working parents worry about childcare if campuses do not open, but our teachers' are not there to babysit, they are there to educate and it's every parent's responsibility to figure out who watches their kids when they are at work, my family included. What worries me is the transportation to and from school. I have six kids in the third through twelfth grade this school year at three different campuses; Kekaha Elementary, Waimea Canyon Middle School and Waimea High School. Five of my kids need to take the bus. Will the schools continue to offer bus rides? If so, how will social distancing be enforced? What about lunch time, will students be allowed to gather in the cafeteria? What about recesses? Passing between classes? Or will they be expected to remain in the same classroom all day everyday? Do you really believe students will physically distance themselves from each other at all times? Because I don't. Our kids' desire to be with their friends will overpower the need for physical distancing.

A better approach, I think, is to assess each student individually, identify students who need the extra in-school support to successfully pass their classes and allow those students to return to campuses. We cannot realistically fill our classes with 30 students and expect three foot distancing to be enough to keep them all safe. Our classrooms are small and can not accommodate that much space. Three feet between desks is not enough! It must be six feet and each desk should be equipped with plastic barriers on each side as well as the front.

Have we also taken in to consideration the mental effects this reopening plan may have on students? My senior and sophomore students are having serious anxiety over the upcoming school year. My sophomore has very recently developed alopecia due to psychological stress as no one else in our family has ever had it. He tells me EVERYTHING! When he expressed his worry over going back to school with the recent spikes of Coronavirus cases I had no idea it had bothered him so much that the mental stress of it was taking a physical toll on him and he now has two bald spots on his head. I am at the point where we are seriously considering homeschooling him because that will be what's best for him should our state proceed with this half-baked plan for reopening our schools.

On a positive note, my third grader attended the summer program at Kekaha Elementary. Due to the small classes (four students per classroom) and the diligence of the teachers and staff who enforced physical and social distancing in and out of the classroom (including a methodically planned out drive thru drop off and pick up,) when a student who attended the program tested positive for Coronavirus was identified, no one else on their campus had been infected. That is amazing considering how easily transmitted this virus is! For the health and safety of the staff, students and community, Kekaha Elementary's principal, Mrs. Asahi, made the decision to switch to the online distance learning platform for the rest of the summer program. Within a couple of days they had homework packets and chromebooks ready for pickup. This is the kind of back to school plan I can support: Small classes, shorter school days, trained teachers and staff who implement social and physical distancing, individually plated lunch pickup right before leaving school at 11:30 and only allowing registered students and staff on campus. In the event that someone on campus is identified to have the virus, be prepared to immediately switch to distance learning. Then again, there were only about 50 students and staff across the whole campus for summer school.

There are too many issues that have not been resolved yet, Hawai'i is just not prepared to safely allow all of our children back to school in a month. It won't take much for our local health system to be overwhelmed. We don't have the capacity

to treat and provide the care needed should a mass outbreak occur. Until the DOE comes up with a solid, functional solution, we as parents should be able to choose the learning platform we are comfortable with for our children. The liability will then be shared between the schools and the families as it will be an informed and voluntary decision. I can absolutely see people trying to take advantage of the situation and sue the state if their child becomes infected with Coronavirus and then spreading it to their families because their child was “forced” to go back to on-campus schooling. I have personally been told or overheard these exact words from more than a dozen parents and I rarely get out anymore. I do not share the same mentality but can you imagine how many others might?

Please reconsider your approach on reopening schools. Come up with a better plan. And until then, give the parents and students the opportunity to choose what is best for our families this school year.

Mahalo for the opportunity to voice my thoughts and concerns.

Miriam Mata

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nancy Maupin <nancy.maupin@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

Evidence points to the coronavirus being transmitted in part through aerosols in the air. I work at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School and do not feel that 3 feet is a safe distance for students to be separated in the classroom. Students should be separated the recommended 6 feet and should be required to wear masks in the classroom.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Nancy Maupin

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re-opening of Schools

J Shigaki <jmshigaki@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:22 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Good Afternoon Hawai'i State Board of Education members,

I am writing to you as an individual and in hopes that you will look for the safety of our teachers, students, families of teachers and students, administration, and staff. There is a push to open schools with students in classrooms with no masks and 3 feet distancing as outlined by the one page memo by the DOE. I say this is a recipe for disaster because it has been proven that if there is one person who is asymptomatic can affect everyone in the room. I don't think even with masks and 6 feet distancing will work since there is bound to be a student who will be noncompliant and will push for everyone to get sick.

Therefore my request is simple and clear: Go online distancing till December and see if there is a vaccine/cure by then. As I have been saying to a few people in my inner circle, no one lived through the 1917 flu pandemic so there is no data that returning to schools will work. Let us all be safe and stay home until the cure/vaccine is available. Then we can go back to school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says that by having students stay at home, it would damage the students emotionally and mentally. Where did they get data with that? I looked at their site and I don't see data. I heard it through CNN but it was from opinions from a few doctors stating that. There is no data because this has never been experienced before. However, we do see data that when people go out, COVID-19 spiked as compared when we were in a shutdown. There is no comparison.

I'm not sure if you saw this article but it seems mainstream media is keeping quiet about what is going on with Florida concerning children: More than 7,000 kids have tested positive for coronavirus in Florida. 12 have MIS-C

More than 7,000 kids have tested positive for coronavirus in Florida. 12...

One 11-year-old and two teenagers died from COVID-19-related complications in Florida and more than 7,000 other ...

This alarming.

Here are several other concerns:

1) There is no concrete plan to take temperature check at school's entrance location. Are we telling teachers to look for symptoms or even purchasing our own temperature checks?

2) Did you know that rooms with air conditioning is a breeding ground for virus spread? Please check this link from the NHK who conducted tests about this: https://youtu.be/59tQeL0ehbM Without air conditioning, it will be very hot in the classrooms.

I plead to every one of you. None of us experienced through a worldwide pandemic. Why chance it? As a kid, I had pneumonia which caused me to miss school for about a month. I was put into a isolation room and not able to see anyone. When I recovered, the aftermath made me prone to bronchitis and I was not able to participate in organized basketball, baseball or let alone Football. In college, I was finally able to play intramural basketball but still winded. At the late 40's, I walked the Maui Marathon because for once in my life, I was confident of completing it without dying on the road.

COVID-19 is not to be taken lightly. Even if you recover from it, your life is never the same and you will have to keep get checkups to make sure the other parts of the body are ok. Who is going to pay that bill? Are you? Government?

Let's be safe until there is a drug or vaccine for it.

Jon Shigaki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

2020-2021 School Opening Plan

Kaimi Malama <kmalama@pueo.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Josephine Malama and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Pu’ohala Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. In my opinion, 3 ft distancing is unacceptable.

Children are not furniture that will stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arms out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, safety is priority. I cannot trust that all parents are teaching their children good hygiene and safe distancing, which may be putting others at risk, myself included. . It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Josephine Malama
Concerned Educator

--
Mahalo,
Ka'imi Malama
SpED Teacher
808-305-5900

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Carleen Burns <hulamom24@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am currently a Science teacher at Kihei Elementary. I am very concerned about the 3ft rule change because I'm at the high risk age for Covid and many of our children have grandparents either living with them or taking care of them. So please reconsider your proposal.
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Jennifer Kunisaki <jlkunisaki@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:35 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in response to the new ruling that Hawaii Public school students will be allowed to be spaced 3 feet apart, instead of 6 feet. I do not agree with this, as I do not feel that any student will be able to face forward throughout the school day and not turn around at any time. It does not make sense adults have to be spaced 6 feet apart in their work setting, in doctors' offices, grocery stores, banks or other public setting. Adults are better able to follow such rule than children, but even adults at times forget this new rule and have come within the 6 ft in check out lines in stores. With only 1 teacher to 20+ plus students, I am sure it will be hard for the teacher to enforce students to face forward at all times.

With the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in several of the states on the mainland and the state being able to allow mainland visitors starting August 1, we will need to be even more diligent about following social distancing rules, to prevent ourselves from becoming vulnerable to contractinga and spreading the coronavirus. Also experts have said that there will likely be a surge of coronavirus cases in the fall, along with the flu season and the finding of a new swine flu strain that has a potential to become another pandemic. We need to be extra careful, because as in several states on the mainland, they are backsliding and having to close down places such as beaches, bars, etc. If we do not follow the social distancing rules, the numbers of coronavirus cases will only increase and we will have to close schools and switch to virtual learning methods only. This would be very difficult for students have parents that work and cannot be home to assist them with their schoolwork. Also, there are many families who do not have web access or computers to be able to participate in virtual learning methods.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my testimony. I ask that you re-consider the rule of spacing students from 3 feet to 6 feet apart.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Pagay(mother of a 2nd grader at Pu'u Kukui Elementary School- Wailuku, Maui)

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening Schools

Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser <beccasuehi@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser and I am speaking as both a teacher and a grandparent. I am a Special Education Teacher at Nanaikapono Elementary and my grandchild attends Nanakuli Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I am returning to the classroom next year and will be teaching Kindergarten through second grade students in a pull out program. These are children who are between the ages of 5 and 8. If you've ever spent any time with children this age, you know that they are very unaware of personal space and need that physical interaction with their peers and the adults who work with them.

Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arms out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

What message are you sending to teachers when you agree that 3 feet is sufficient space between students if they are all facing the same direction? Are you saying our health and safety and that of our students is unimportant? What about the health and safety of our families? My mother is 76 and I cannot see her if I'm teaching face-to-face with my students because of the fear that I might give her COVID-19.

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

As a grandparent to a child with autism, I am greatly concerned that he might be exposed to OVID-19 if we don't ensure things like having non-contact thermometers and temperature checks daily. My grandson cannot tell me verbally how he feels, but he can show me. At the end of the day, I need to ensure his safety since he lives with me. Unless you've experienced the nonverbal ways a child with autism expresses their feelings, you should know that it is done, sometimes violently, in a very loud way through crying, screaming, and sometimes hitting their head on the ground. This makes for an exhausting evening. Now imagine if that same child were sick and unable to tell us how he is feeling aside from lashing out at us. I wouldn't wish this on anyone. Unfortunately, it is a reality of having a child with autism in the home.

I want to send my grandson to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children's education, but their safety is priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn't as careful with social distancing, they are children and don't know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Please think about everyone involved in the reopening of the schools. Without a plan adhering to the six feet for social distancing, we are putting more than the teachers and students at risk. We put the entire community at risk of spreading COVID-19, which does not help flatten the curve.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser
Special Education Teacher
Nanaikapono Elementary School

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Sandy Joy and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Aikahi Elementary School. I am 55 years old and I live with my elderly father who is 87.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. It is nearly impossible to keep the students from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. The students are used to to doing partner and group work, so it will be hard for them to just stay in one place.

My school says that we can fit all students with 3 feet apart between desks. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from desk to desk, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a teacher I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. Why are we not enforcing safe social distancing guidelines which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting the children and teachers at risk. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority. We all want the children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,
Sandy Joy

Testimony

maria rossman <mariarossman@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

The latest agreement with the BOE, DOE and HSTA is an **invitation to tragedy.**

The fact that **teachers** are being required to work on site as opposed to working from home AND that the **students** are not allowed to do distance learning 100% of the time means that there will be opportunities for children and staff to get COVID.

The schools are **not** able to do deep cleaning every day. The children ARE NOT being **required** to have 6 feet social distancing and to wear masks. It's impossible to clean every single thing a child touches throughout the day; and there is no guarantee that parents will agree to let their children wear masks.

Daily deepcleaning, 6-feet social distancing,wearing masks inside are **NOT BEING MADE MANDATORY. Even if they were mandatory, they would be impossible to enforce.It's impossible to clean every single thing a child touches throughout the day; and there is no guarantee that parents will agree to let their children wear masks.**

Please listen to the scientists and **allow teachers to work from home and allow students to do 100% distance learning.**
Maria Rossman
teacher -Holualoa El.
Kailua Kona, HI

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Fred Magnenat <fred1m@liholiho.org> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.
My name is Fred Magnenat, a veteran 18-year teacher at Liholiho ELementary. It is with disbelief that I read that the HIDOE chooses to go against CDC guidelines for safely opening schools by suggesting that students can be spaced a mere 3 feet apart as long as they are facing forward. There is NO classroom of students who will remain facing forward as they are naturally social and will eventually turn around to talk to a classmate or forget that they need to face forward. Also, per the State of Hawaii Department of Health's recommendations, I have been teaching all my students to cough or sneeze into their own shoulder sleeve which requires them to at least partially turn left or right! This practice is a sound health practice and will be much less harmful at a physical distance of 6 feet apart (CDC) versus the HIDOE's recommendation of 3 feet apart. How is the HIDOE keeping our keiki safe? Even the University of Hawaii will have a 6 feet apart protocol when their school systems open in late August. This seems like a double standard to say the least! Please carefully consider following the CDC guidelines for reopening school with fidelity. I would feel terribly if any of my students contracted Covid-19 because I did the least that the HIDOE recommended instead of the most based on available scientific information.

Humbly,
Fred Magnenat
King Liholiho Elementary School

Testimony

Eric and Renee Romerdahl <eric.renee.romerdahl@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:04 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Regarding: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

I am a first grade, National Board Certified, highly qualified and experienced teacher who strongly objects to the recent HDOE's policy of allowing student desks to be as close as three feet apart from each other in classrooms.

The Hawaii State Department of Education's policy allowing students' desks to be as close as three feet to each other in classrooms when school resumes in August goes against the CDC recommendations and violates the recent resolution made with HSTA regarding the reopening of schools. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart to reduce risk of infection. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. The CDC also recommends social distancing of at least 6 feet apart from others who are not from your household, and to wear a cloth face covering. In our state, you must wear a face mask to enter any business and you must stay 6 feet apart from others. How the Hawaii DOE can even suggest that a three-foot policy between students is incomprehensible!!

Spacing students at a distance closer than six feet apart puts myself, my students, their families, and our communities at an extremely high risk for contracting COVID-19. It does not provide for the health and safety of our students and staff members!! Neither does having face masks as optional in classrooms. Stating that classrooms are a "safe zone, ohana, or bubble" is misleading and incorrect. Just because students are together six hours a day does not mean we are safe to be with one another without the protection of masks and a six-foot distance between us. We are not together for 18 hours of the day, and have no control over where our students are, what they are doing, or whom they are encountering during these hours. We only see students for ¼ of a day, certainly not enough time to declare us a safe zone!!

The CDC recommendations must be followed and adhered to with diligence in order for our school communities to be safe for all. New York City schools have had 74 staff members die from COVID-19; we need to protect our staff members and students to ensure that this does not happen in our community! I personally, am in a high-risk category and do not feel safe unless both I and those around me are following social distancing of 6 feet or greater and wearing protective masks. I am unwilling and should not be subjected to being put at risk by simply performing my job of teaching our keiki. I am however willing, to teach them in a classroom with social distancing of at least 6 feet apart from others and with everyone wearing facial masks.

No one understands the importance of bring our keiki back to school campuses for face to face learning more than I. As a first-grade teacher I can attest to the importance of face to face learning, and how difficult it is for our youngest students to participate in distance learning. I am extremely concerned about the education of our students and the quality of education they are receiving during COVID-19. However, we cannot put our students' and teachers' health at risk just to get our student back on campuses again. We must wait, do blended learning, and bring our students back slowly and safely to school. Rushing by changing policies such as the recently announced

dangerous three-foot policy only puts us at risk and will set everything backwards as the COVID-19 virus spreads among our schools.

I implore the DOE to make the health and safety of students and staff top priority above everything else, by retracting the three-foot social distancing policy and instigating the policy of having six feet or more between desks and individuals in our classrooms.

Renee Romerdahl

National Board Certified Teacher

Kihei Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jacqueline Damare <jdamare@vt.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon,

I am a teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School and I am writing today to share my anxieties over our expected return to school. My name is Jackie Lockhart and I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. While it will likely be possible for my students to be seated 6 feet apart in my classroom with our school's plan, I know that is not the case for most classes in my school and on our island. If we are expected and supported to only keep our keiki just 3 feet apart, I would not feel comfortable returning back to the classroom. If the CDC recommends 6 feet apart, good ventilation, and everyone in face masks, then we should make that happen at our schools. I want to continue to be proud of our state with the efforts we are taking to protect the safety of our residents.

Jackie Lockhart
Teacher
Ewa Makai Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening of Schools for August 4

John Landers <john.landers.3@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As the SCC Chairman and a very concerned parent for the well being of our students abd Teachers at Waikoloa Elementary school, I have major concerns over the impact the startup may have on the whole community. My concern over proper social distancing in classrooms for the health of everyone and not being susceptible to specifically the Covid 19 virus.

My wife and I are both seriously considering home school instead of returning to a classroom environment for the safety of not just our son, but also our family as a whole.

Please reconsider your opening process to keep social distancing protection, complete disinfecting all areas of every school campus and the health and safety your number one goal of importance, while getting the education and development of all children. Online learning may be the only solution with a very minimal impact.

Thank you for your consideration and keeping out community healthy.

John Landers
808 990 0383

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on reopening of schools

STEPHANIE MCLAUGHLIN <smclaughlin808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: STEPHANIE GMAIL <smclaughlin808@gmail.com>

I have been a public school teacher in Hawaii for the past 30 years. I am a teacher at Moanalua High school. I support a six foot distancing requirement between classroom desks and I support students wearing face masks at all times when in the classroom. I guarantee you that I will be wearing a face mask at all times when teaching in my classroom and that I will NOT get any closer than 6 feet to my students in the classroom regardless of what the BOE decides. I am not willing to get sick or die for my job.

--

Stephanie McLaughlin

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Amy Sun <amysunis@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Amy Sun, and I teach middle school math at Hawaii Technology Academy, a public charter school, in Waipahu.

I know that these are unprecedented times, and our understanding of COVID-19 is constantly evolving. However, why are we holding our students and teachers to the lower health standard of maintaining only 3 feet apart? When the CDC and businesses mandate 6 feet distancing and masks to be worn at all times, why are we insisting that the (often poorly ventilated) classroom is a safer setting to warrant lax regulations?

Yes, Hawaii has had lower cases of COVID-19 compared to other locations, but it was a result of our vigilance early on. Now that stores and businesses have reopened and people have let down their guard, we have seen our own increase in cases. This is pure logic. When we put people in riskier situations where the virus can easily spread between individuals, the virus will spread and very quickly. We're all tired of the virus, but the virus doesn't care. My 8th graders could tell you all about the math behind infectious diseases and how quickly viruses can spread exponentially. When we simulated a fake and uninhibited zombie apocalypse in November, our entire class was "infected" very quickly. That's how viruses work when given the optimal conditions.

What is the message we are sending to our students when we say we care for their safety and well-being but our actions say otherwise? Who will be held responsible for the inevitable rise in COVID cases among our young children and vulnerable teachers? We all live on an island. It goes without saying that creating higher risks in the schools ultimately creates a higher risk for us all as a community.

--
Amy Sun

"It is NOT enough to be good. You must contribute good to the world. The world must be a better place for your presence. And the good that is in you must spread to others. You can and MUST rise above mediocrity, above indifference. You CAN become involved and speak with a strong voice for that which is right."

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Keep Hawaii Schools CLOSED

Marco A. Silva, REALTOR® <marco@konaluxuryrealestate.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying for Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

To think that there is a SAFE way to send students back to school in Hawaii, during a pandemic of epic proportions, is absolutely ludicrous. Keep public schools closed and offer online education.

Bringing students back in person endangers the keiki, staff, their Ohana and our entire State.

Children can't be trusted to wear masks, social distance and safely sanitize. They are keiki. They are young, they are impulsive. All it would take, is ONE keiki to come into a classroom, bringing something from their home, and then BOOM - it is shared to the whole classroom ....the school, the community and more.This is without a doubt unnecessary and completely unacceptable. Imagine this throughout the State multiplied by 283 schools and over 13,000 teachers in the State of Hawaii.

Why in the world would you risk the safety and well being of thousands of our island residents?

The only safe way keiki can learn would be via online learning.

If you proceed and bring thousands of children back to school, know for a fact that COVID will be transferred and your decision making will have played a part in this.

Death and terrible suffering can be avoided, children can still learn, **PLEASE** make the right decision.

with aloha,

Marco

Marco A. Silva
REALTOR®, Broker

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is **Rayce Tamanaha**, and I am speaking as a special education teacher at Wahiawa Middle School.

At Wahiawa, many students come from multigenerational homes. This past year, about 20% of my students were being raised with their grandparents, or people who’d be identified as “high risk.” If we are providing an education to our students, their well-being should be of our utmost priority. However, with the current protocol stating “optional masks in the classroom” and “3 feet distancing,” a virus is still transmissible. Despite the research that children are of less risk of catching COVID-19, they can still be carriers. If the virus were to travel home to the student's guardians, results could be fatal. We need to acknowledge that we are subjecting our students to the possible loss of a loved one, if these protocols were enforced. Additionally, many teachers live with elders or are elders themselves. I want to do as much as we can for our families, but this is not enough.

This summer our school offered in-person summer school to students requiring credit recovery. We invited back about 50 students a day. Despite these low numbers, many students struggled to comply with the enforced social distancing guidelines. I observed innocent mistakes like sharing food, exchanging hugs, and talking at close distances. Our students are aware, they are knowledgeable of their situations, but mistakes are bound to occur. It is in our best interest to do our best to prevent them. At the very minimum, this begins with a 6ft distancing rule and mandatory masks in the classroom.

I’d like to acknowledge that Hawaii is not immune to national affairs either. Despite being naturally “self-isolated,” we are expected to see a rise in tourism, as mainland states open up. Cases are rising exponentially on the mainland, putting our locals at risk. This is the future that we can foresee and prepare for accordingly. Thus far, The Daily, a New York broadcasting company released (7/6), that COVID-19 can be reidentified as a vascular disease. This means it activates a coagulation cascade, triggering the build-up of blood clots in the vessels. Once formed, these blood clots are able to travel to vital organs such as the lungs, heart, brain and gastric system. So far, we are seeing low fatalities, and high recoveries. But those who recover are at risk of developing blood clots, and other associated health conditions. Children are not immune to these conditions as well.

Additionally, the Wuhan mutation of this virus has been recently outnumbered in the U.S. by the Italian strain. Researchers have described this strain as “less lethal but more transmissible.” This should be concerning to everyone planning to return to school under these protocols. 60-80% of documented cases have been traced back to indoor transmission. Aerosol particles linger in the spaces they occupy, for 2-4 hours. This is why 6ft and masks are absolutely necessary.

I am concerned and I’ll stand for change. My email is rayce.tamanaha.19@tfacorps.org. Please email with any questions or concerns. I’ll provide further testimonials if need be.

Sincerely,
Rayce Tamanaha

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Naomi Kamauoha <keoneomi05@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:37 PM

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

To whom it may concern:

I am submitting testimony in regards to the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am an elementary teacher on Oahu.

Your plan to re-enter students & teachers to school has me feeling very anxious and uncomfortable for many reasons but I will share three important thoughts.

First, a 3-feet distancing between students is irresponsible. You are jeopardizing the health and safety of our youngest citizens by blatantly going against the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Studies have confirmed that droplets travel beyond 3-feet. In addition, the CDC guidelines state that a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN. Keeping a mask on a 6 year old for several hours will be a challenge in itself. At a 3 feet distance with more than 12 students will be impossible.

Second, sitting 3-feet apart WITH NO MASKS is dangerous. It is my understanding that students will be allowed to remove their masks after initial entrance onto campus every day. It is understandable. They have that right. However, taking off their masks doubling with sitting only 3-feet apart from each other puts them in unsafe territory. Let me reiterate, a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN. My first graders comes to school with runny noses and no fever and love to touch everything and anything. They don't always cover their cough or sneezes. Keeping a sanitized room, in high temperatures, with 20 or more first graders, sitting at 3 feet apart, with no mask, makes me extremely worried for everyone's safety.

Third, it is stated that the 3-feet distance will work IF students are facing forward at all times while in the classroom. I can guarantee that my first graders will not be facing forward at all times nor will they keep their hands to themselves. They are social creatures who learn and experience the world around them through interaction. Students will turn to speak to each other. Your ideal scenario of students "only looking forward" while sitting in the classroom inhibits our students from ENGAGING (from a safe distance) and learning. This is irrational.

I love teaching and would like to have all my students with me everyday, all day but I am apprehensive about returning to the classroom under these circumstances. Your 3-feet component of the plan will put many students & educators in harm's way. Please revise this plan to reflect your concern and care for the health and safety of everyone who comes to a public school campus.

Mahalo,

Naomi M. Kamauoha

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Minimum 6 feet spacing between student seating

Grace Chen-Ellis <gracechenellis@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Grace Chen-Ellis <gracechenellis@gmail.com>

Aloha Hawaii DOE,

I write to object to the Board's failure to require six feet spacing between student seating in Hawaii classrooms. All of the science indicates that a minimum distance of six feet is necessary to effectively prevent spread of the virus.

This is also the minimum states all across the country -- including our own -- have required or requested the public observe in public spaces.

Please reconsider your mandate and adopt rules that follow the scientifically proven guidelines to insure the safety of students and teachers alike.

Mahalo for your consideration.
Grace Chen-Ellis, PhD

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Keoniana Flavin <keonianaflavin@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:42 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern.

I do feel with as uncertain as these times are with an ever changing world we live in, How can we possibly be certain that it is safe to have our keiki return to school? The statistic is that 10% of our student body will catch the Covid19 virus. I just imagine if my child with Asthma is among those infected, or my 5 year old with a compromised immune system were to become infected, Or just maybe they don't catch it but they carry it home to my 1 year old. The Cons definitely outway the Pros in my opinion. Would you put your child in harms way by choice? This virus is new, its mutating, its scary. We do not know enough about it. Im struggling at the thought of choosing to send my children to school OR try maybe somehow to Homeschool them. The thought of them going back to school in the midst of all this is terrifying. I know people need to work, childcare is a huge issue, there are children in abusive homes. I get there is all of that to consider, but maybe give us parents the option to send our students to in school instruction OR do distance learning from home. Why does it have to be either or. Why not give each family the option to choose whats best for them, whats best for their keiki and ohana. I know as a public school system this maybe difficult. But we can come up with a way, there has to be a way to give us the option to choose! To do whats right for our families statewide. Ive spoken to many other families and the option to choose would be HUGE!! It makes the most sense. Please please please consider this!!! Take the stress off of everyone by giving them this option, the option to choose.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Athena A <kuhiwa@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

In regards to V1(a) opening our Hawai'i Public Schools, please mandate the 6 feet apart rule to safeguard our children and and school staff. This is a necessary precaution that we should require as the second wave of COVID 19 appears in our nation.

Athena Anderson, M. Ed
Kalama Intermediate

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Gayle Nakayama <gnakayama@aikahies.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-21 School Year.” My name is Gayle Nakayama and I am speaking as a teacher. I I teach at ‘Aikahi Elementary School in Kailua and have been a teacher there for 30+ years.

As a teacher, especially being an older teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing the BOE is proposing, is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. My Principal loves the idea of 3 feet distancing, as this will allow him to fill each class with 20 students, and school can reopen “as usual”. I understand the need/wish to open up schools as soon as possible and get things back to normal, especially if you are a working parent and need childcare. But with Covid numbers going up, and especially as businesses and travel open up in the state, it’s worrying.

I’ve been pretty good about quarantining since Spring Break. I live with an older brother who isn’t in good health, and I myself have been dealing with autoimmune issues for the past 10 years, so I do my best to social distance, to wear my mask when I’m outside, and to wash my hands and sanitize. Going back to face to face teaching without a good, solid plan is really scary to me. I don’t want to be the person who brings Covid-19 into the house.

Truthfully I’m not even sure 6 feet distance is enough when you’re dealing with kids. Kids who squirm and fidget even on the best days. These are kids who haven’t seen each other since Spring Break. How are we going to keep them from getting into each other’s “bubble”? They touch their faces CONSTANTLY, and scratch and pick whatever they can get their hands on.

Teachers need to be supplied with non-contact thermometers and with guidance as to what to do when/if a student has a temperature. We need cleaning supplies and PPE also. I don’t want to have to bring my stash from home.

As the starting date looms closer, please keep safety for all the priority and education second. Please let teachers be a part of the discussion. We will be on the frontlines soon and are the ones at the most risk.

Sincerely,
Gayle Nakayama

This email is the property of the Hawaii Department of Education

Testimony

Michelle Escobar <mothersunshine8@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Michelle Escobar and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am in an unusual position as the wife of an educator, Adam Escobar of Waiakea High School. I am speaking up because my husband is too proud and loyal to his school. He's been with WHS since 1993 and he has the martyr attitude of a teacher. He is also in a dangerous position health-wise. In 2018 he was admitted to the hospital for Pulmonary Embolism and DVT. He had/has hundreds of blood clots in his lungs and a giant clot in his leg. He's been on blood thinners since and he lives a normal active life. With DOE's lack of concern for teachers' safety, I am angry that nobody else is looking out for him. He is not willing to be labelled by ADA, or have special accommodations, and he shouldn't have to. If the health and well being of teachers and students were put ahead of the economy and fear of lawsuits, I wouldn't have to speak up. We have heard there will be no discipline if a student refuses to wear a mask, meaning they don't have to if they don't want to. My husband can do nothing but allow these students to put others at risk?! We can tell the teacher to ask for help but my husband will refuse to be a burden on his boss, to be a complainer, or to look weak. We've also learned that students will be placed 6 feet apart side-by-side but only 3 feet apart front to back? I realize this is to fit more students in a classroom but it is against the rules of social distancing and, most importantly, a very dangerous risk to squeeze more students in. Not worth it. Is there even a maximum number of students allowed in a classroom? We're assuming 20? 20 students in a small box of a room with no air conditioning, no air filters, nothing but fans to circulate the virus around and into the faces of every person in the room. It's not safe. Are there even any rules for the teachers and students to keep a safe distance? How is he supposed to help students in need if he can't come within 6 feet unless he wants to risk his own health (and he will do this, I assure you). And lastly, we have learned the teacher will have to disinfect classrooms between classes because in all reality there is nobody else to do it. This means he will be exposed to more surfaces, more chances of contamination. Unless DOE can spend enough money to put everyone, including the teacher in their own plexiglass cubicle from floor to ceiling, this is a terrifying scenario.

I don't envy your position. Times have changed, and this pandemic is forcing us to look at the inevitable. It's time for education to change and make a paradigm shift toward the future rather than trying to make everything fit into an outdated system that not only no longer works, it is no longer safe. Online school with available one-on-one assistance is a reasonable short-term resolution for high school students. A shift toward trade schooling and mentorships are viable options for the long term. Waiakea High School has already touched on the idea with their academies, but one-size-fits-all requirements get in the way of its full potential. The rest of the World starts young teenagers on their career paths through trade schools instead of adding 4-6 more years of the same system they went through since age 4. More focus on the individual's strengths, and true preparation for their future, and less on herding obedience and study ethics that suddenly ends at 18.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope you will do something to make sure everyone, including my husband, is safe.

Aloha,
Michelle Escobar

Testimony

ipo kaupu <ipo.kaupu@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha my name is Ku'uipo Kaleohano I am speaking on behalf of my children who attend Ho'okena Elementary and Konawaena High School. I am also speaking as an EA working in FSC Classroom. With all this COVID-19 going around I strongly believe that students this school year should be doing virtual online classes. I don't want to my babies at risk or have them coming home and my dad gets sick he is 80 years old. We can find a way to make packets or do online classes for all students till this pandemic is over. We wouldn't want a student or staff to catch COVID and guaranteed school will get shut down. So I strongly suggest we keep doing virtual learning.
Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

ipo kaupu <ipo.kaupu@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Keeping children only 3 ft apart is unsafe. If in public we have to be 6 ft apart then it should be done within our schools. And if that can't happen we should keep our children home and continue with online virtual learning.
Having children in elementary middle and high school is going to be a challenge. But with virtual learning I will know they are safe at home learning and away from danger.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony...Please move our schools to distance learning

Matthew Rossman <matthew.rossman@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education members,

I am writing to urge you to keep students distance learning. Please do not allow students to report to campuses at this time. I continue to support you,

Opening school campuses will cause a surge in virus transmissions. Kids and adults will be meeting, exchanging papers, exchanging items, waiting in lines, using public bathrooms, riding buses, congregating at snack and lunchtimes, sharing items and generally spreading viruses indiscriminately.

Adults will be in public spaces too, some trying desperately to minimize virus spread, while at the same time juggling time sensitive learning objectives, trying to "catch kids up,"and trying to weigh risks of using strategies (grouping, partnering, one on one) to increase student learning, knowing that these strategies require entering the immediate proximity of the students' space.

As you know, there is a significant number of parents, children, and even employees that think the virus is all a hoax. We are not allowed to turn parents away when they do not distance, do not mask, or consider masking and distancing a punishment for their child. These individuals may not be turned a way, but will definitely be better served if distance learning is a universal option.

We already know the children are spreading the virus, as Texas reports https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/ . California hospitals are overwhelmed with COVID 19 patients before they have even tried to re open a school. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/07/us/coronavirus-border-mexico-california-el-centro.html. The airlines will soon bring all these infected individuals to our islands and into our schools.

Our hospitals are small. Our teachers and staff are older and fragile, and are often coming to work sick because they can't afford the alternative. Please let us teach from home until this is under control.

Our schools are not equipped to handle a pandemic. My tiny classroom is over 100 years old. I have two small children to care for. I do not want to bring them to a COVID risk zone, where kids and adults may approach them without masks, without handwashing, or sanitizer. I certainly cannot leave my children at home unattended, the "blended model is much more difficult than distance learning. I certainly cannot give my children to a daycare that may also have COVID.

Please...distance learning is the best option. We need to distance learning for a little longer until we can find antibodies and vaccines for this terrible disease.

Thank you for keeping our state safe to this point. You have performed so admirably against all the push back and pressure. Let us not let our teachers, principals, and keiki, die because we were too impatient to distance learn for a few more months.

Thank you for your work. Thank you for protecting the citizens of Hawaii.

Sincerely,
Matthew Rossman
Teacher, Holualoa Elementary
Big Island, Hawaii

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Brenda Kikuyama <bkikuyama@mac.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

As an educator,

I am embarrassed that 6foot social distancing for public spaces are being squished to 3feet for public school students & school staff.

I am angry that the BOE, DOE, & Superintendent is not speaking on student & teachers behalf.

Understandably, Life long learning and our State's economy has to move forward, however... please stop Pushing maximum contact hours, maximum students in one classroom, before health & safety.

Public schools are not bars or restaurants that have to maximize profits for space. Even these facilities honor 6 feet Safety guidelines!!! I'm sure bars & Restaraunts would jump at this 3 foot social distancing exception for their economical boost.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening school

Gary Hashimoto <gary.hashimoto@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

The irony:

https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2020-07-02/more-than-40-school-principals-in-quarantine-after-coronavirus-exposure-at-in-person-meeting

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Masks and 3 feet

Gary Hashimoto <gary.hashimoto@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Optional masks and 3 feet? Playing with fire BOE/DOE.

LONDON >> More than 200 scientists have called for the World Health Organization and others to acknowledge that the coronavirus can spread in the air — a change that could alter some of the current measures being taken to stop the pandemic.
In a letter published this week in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, two scientists from Australia and the U.S. wrote that studies have shown “beyond any reasonable doubt that viruses are released during exhalation, talking and coughing in microdroplets small enough to remain aloft in the air.” That means people in certain indoor conditions could be at greater risk of being infected than was previously thought.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A)

Gayle Enriquez <makanipunahele@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. I am writing as a caretaker for my 97 year old father and as a 4th grade teacher at Pahoa Elementary School. My concerns may seem selfish as I ask for your consideration for my health and welfare as I am being asked to go to work in a classroom and school environment that not many people would gladly accept.
Yes, my students are important. I would not have entered into this profession if not for this one reason that I wanted to make a difference in at least one child. I love learning and wanted to share that with them. But when a child is asked, "Who would you protect first?", my answer as that child would be to protect my family. My concern is that I would be exposed to 28 different students from 28 different environments and situations and then go home to my family with the chance that I may have come in contact with someone on campus that may be a carrier of Covid. This does not even count the countless number of adults from custodians to cafeteria workers and even parents that come to the campus daily
I am NOT willing to risk my family, and most importantly, my 97 year old father that I care for at my home.
Please consider what teachers are fighting for. WE also care about our children, our grandchildren,brothers and sisters. Understand that we, as parents, need to also step up and like our ancestors before us, begin to take control of teaching our children. It doesn't always have to be done in the schools. It begins at home.
Please keep us safe.
Mahalo,
Gayle Enriquez
Pahoa Elementary School
Pahoa, Hawai'i.
I

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony against exposing children and teachers to COVID by reopening schools

Ruth Silva <ruthsilva0109@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:20 PM

Aloha,

I'm writing to express my disappointment at the recent decision by the Department of Education to endanger the lives of students, teachers, parents and the broader community by opening schools and refusing to allow online teaching.

The "requirements" by the DOE of not requiring face masks and only restricting social distancing to 3 feet defies explanation. With cases rising all over the country, including on our beautiful islands, I cannot understand why you would risk further exposure.

So many of our teachers are at risk of serious illness due to their age and underlying health conditions. Are their lives not worth protecting? What about elderly grandparents, some of whom are the main caregivers to children. All of the safety measures prescribed are token measures against this disease under the best conditions, but when you add small children into the mix then how can it be justified? Will you place blame for infections on the schools and individual teachers when the virus starts killing many in our community?

I believe that our Department cares for all of our community. I understand that you are under pressure to open up schools for children and parents who need to return to work and cannot find alternative childcare arrangements. At what cost?

Perhaps a better option would be to invest in teacher and parent training to make online learning successful, to give incentives to children to learn and excel, and to reward our families for trying to protect each other by social distancing.

Perhaps children can be divided into groups of three or four so they and their parents become learning teams and have lessons on online for a few hours every day. Maybe the parents and children of teams can then band together and learn together online so they don't feel so alone or disconnected. If teachers were online teaching to only four children at a time, rather then 20 or thirty, then perhaps they will have a better chance of engaging children and adults.

There has to be a better way and I believe that you, your dedicated teachers, parents and our community can come up with models that other states and countries can follow, that will protect our community and help children excel in their studies.

Please do not put our teachers into a terrible position of having to choose their health over their jobs or vise versa. That serves no one.

With aloha,

Ruth Silva
(808) 747-9934

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Jessie Garcia <melenahe@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools, plan for the 2020-2021 school year

Dear members of the Board of Education,
I am writing to you about my concerns around the plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. I am concerned for the safety and well being of myself, my family, my colleagues, my students, their families, and the larger community. The plan for next year seems to invite tragedy. By NOT making social distancing, mask wearing, and other safety measures mandatory it is opening up the students, teachers, staff, families, and therefore the larger community, to a much higher risk of illness and possibly even death. Looking at the news there are rising instances where child care/day care, summer camp,and summer schools around the country are having to close due to large COVID-19 outbreaks. Many of those institutions were using mandatory safety measure and they still had outbreaks. Our state has some of the highest rates of asthma and multi-generational homes. This should be taken into account when making the plan to protect our keiki, their families, our teachers, their families, and the kupuna of our state. Please, for the health and safety of our communities, have an option for teachers and families to work remotely, especially those who are at higher risk. Please, have mandatory mask wearing (unless a doctor's note is provided), social distancing, deep cleaning daily, and other safety measures in place for ALL schools to protect those who are on campus.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Jessica Lee Loy
Teacher-Holualoa Elementary School
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Gavin Takushi <urusaisamurai@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Gavin Takushi. I am a teacher, currently at Ewa Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

In light of the most recent decision to the opening of our school year, I'm very disappointed that our youth of Hawaii's future will have to be subjected to only a 3 foot social distance space. When the rest of the guidelines set forth by the CDC and a greater majority of the public and private establishments are adhering to a strict, six foot social distancing space.

Please put yourself in place of Hawaii's youth, and I ask that you engage in work related matters in a three foot social distance space with an option to wear PPEs. Think about it.

The world wide Pandemic has exposed industries to short-comings of protocols and procedures. However, the decades of short-comings to maintain and or build a better school system is truly showing as we debate the current state of our Public Education System's safety protocols and procedures. Personally, as a teacher of twenty-plus years of service, I've seen our school facilities become worn, out-dated, and unsafe for our keiki-irregardless of its current state due to this Pandemic. What should've been taken cared of in past years should not be swept under the rug, and left for future political debate should there be time.

Three feet, six feet, any feet more, it almost sounds like another children's book with a rhyme in its lyrics. However, for whatever we will be directed to enforce in classrooms, let's work at a collective level (private-public industry hand in hand) to use this crisis to begin to plan and move our public school system forward so that our keiki will continue to receive quality education in facilities that are modern, safe, welcoming, and are adaptable to the future of a new normal.

As I come to a close, will you want to face a child's parent when their child is in dire need of medical attention because "you" decided to keep students only 3 feet apart? Ask yourself, if this is your child attending school for the first time, will you let your child go to school and feel confident and assured that your child is safe? I am asking that you keep the 6 feet social distancing the norm in our schools.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Amber Sevilla <dncingbutterfly56@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:28 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am writing in regards to Discussion Item VI(A):
Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Amber and I work at Helemano Elementary. My children also attend public school. I am writing to ask that the minimum social distancing requirement be mandated at 6 feet apart in classrooms. It is crazy that 3 feet would be an acceptable distance when the CDC recommends 6 feet or more to put children in a category that is not at the most risk of contracting the Coronavirus. If we cannot go out into the public without social distancing 6 feet for just a short amount of time, how can we expect our children to be in a classroom for 5+ hours with just 3 feet between them? And at the same time not being required to wear masks? How can you place students, teachers and other school staff in such an unsafe situation? Even college students will be spaced 6 feet apart. Children are not going to sit facing forward all day long without turning and talking to a friend. It is unacceptable to ask teachers and students to be placed in a situation where they are not properly and safely spaced to remain healthy.

We hope that the BOE will do what is right and change the social distancing requirement to 6 ft in all classrooms.

Amber S.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Adrel Vicente <adrelv@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,
I am the Freshman Academy Counselor at Waiakea High School, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am against the 3 feet distancing requirement and relaxing the mask recommendations in my office/classroom at school. I just went out to get essentials and all the stores in my community I visited have 6 feet social distancing and mask wearing parameters. School is part of our community so the requirements at school should align with the requirements within our general community (or be even better). Furthermore, I have several elderly family members in my household in their 70's and 80's. My elderly father has diabetes, and my elderly uncle has dementia. I would potentially be putting them in danger each time I come home from school if proper guidelines are not followed at my workplace.
Thank you so much for your consideration and stay safe.
Mr. Adrel L. Vicente
Freshman Academy Counselor
Waiakea High School (Hilo, Hawaii Island)

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Feet

Karl Higa <karlhiga@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:32 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

My name is Karl Higa and I am a 5th grade teacher at Noelani Elementary School.

I am writing to you for the first time ever, so you can see how important this issue is for me. As we get closer to the opening of school, I'm getting more and more nervous about being back in the classroom.

We, the teachers, are the ones on the front lines. We are going to be in the classrooms with the students for the whole school day. Students will not cover their mouth for every sneeze or every cough. They're kids, that's normal. This is why we need to be more preventative in our classrooms and provide the space between the desks and students so it lessens the chances of infection. Follow the CDC guidelines. Follow what was promised, 6 feet not 3.

On a separate and personal note, my opinion is that we get everyone in the school system tested for COVID, soon. This is likely going to cost a lot of money, but I would feel much safer if we had a more accurate test given, not just a temperature check. Many that are infected are asymptomatic, meaning they show no signs of infection, while spreading it to others (me), who would have a more severe reaction to the virus. This is the scariest part.

Thank you for reading this.
Stay safe and healthy,

Karl Higa
Noelani Elementary School Teacher
karlhiga@gmail.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Nye <mailjennifer.nye@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The fact that the Hawaii DOE is advocating for a 3 foot distance rule between students' desks is, frankly, absurd. As a teacher approaching 60 years of age with a husband aged 66, I am very concerned. There is no way that students are going to sit facing forward for even 30 minutes without turning to their neighbor to talk. It is just not going to happen, no matter how much training we give them. So now I am further risking my health and the health of my loved ones. NO! I love teaching but am not willing to die for you.
Every article that I have read from either health care professionals or other teachers are strongly against this plan. Who are you honestly looking out for here? I want to get back to teaching and miss my kiddos like crazy but am seeing any benefit to anyone involved in this plan.
Thank you,

Jennifer Nye
Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary
Grade 4 teacher



Written Testimony

Karly Kanehiro <karly.kanehiro@campbell.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,

My name is Karly Kanehiro. I am a social studies teacher at James Campbell High School, going into my 6th year of teaching.

I don't think it wise to reopen schools without at least having the option of all online learning, at least during this time.

One of the reasons it is not safe is because of the rising number of cases we have seen within the past month with 25 cases yesterday (July 5th, 2020), 24 cases the day before (July 4th, 2020), and 29 cases the day before that (July 3rd, 2020). Previously Superintendent Kishimoto had suggested, "DOE recently released a document that included language about a four week of no new cases standard to reopen schools," but the Hawaii DOE is choosing to reopen when our state numbers are the highest it's ever been with about a month before we reopen schools.

In addition to that, our state is deciding to reopen travel starting August 1st, which is within the same week that schools are restarting. I think there are too many things reopening within our state for us to be safe and to be able to keep the number of cases low. Regardless of that, our numbers are already high, so to be able to reopen school and our state to more travel is not safe at all.

Another reason why the DOE had decided to reopen schools was because of the results of the online learning survey, which was based on a very different scenario compared to now. The online survey was meant to understand parents, students, and teacher thoughts on enrichment learning which took place during the 4th quarter of SY 2019-2020. During this time, students weren't required to participate in online learning. If they decided to complete nothing during this enrichment period, that would not negatively affect their grade. For example, if a student received a B in quarter 3, and completed no enrichment work during quarter 4, then their final grade would still be a B. That is not a normal school learning environment and would not be the case or replicated if we were to teach online for the SY 2020-2021. Students would be held accountable for the work they do or do not complete.

Currently, our state is within our "Act with Care" portion of reopening. According to those plans, this is how schools should plan to reopen "Distance learning will continue. Face-to-face instruction is provided for vulnerable learners and early grade levels (K-2; SPED PreK) in compliance with CDC and DOH guidelines. FTF is allowable for all other students." This doesn't seem to match up with what our state is deciding to do as schools more so seem to be in the "recovery" portion of reopening schools which are as follows, "Face-to-face instruction allowed for all students in compliance with CDC and DOH guidelines. Blended learning and distance learning may be used to reduce the number of students on campus to enable social distancing." The only options we were given were face to face learning, blended and hybrid learning, which all require some face to face learning, with the exception of students who opt for all online learning.

Also, on our HIDOE Pandemic Contagious Plan, one of the subsections were titled, "What to do when you discover a person at your campus has been diagnosed with COVID-19," this may or may not be semantics, but this indicates to me that these plans were created with the notion that people will be infected with COVID-19 while schools reopen. That doesn't give staff any ease of mind. We know that there are safer solutions and mostly likely someone will be infected with COVID-19 because we are reopening schools with face to face interaction, and yet we're choosing to do so anyway isn't comforting at all. Another thing that was mentioned in the HIDOE Pandemic Contagious Plan was to keep the following assumptions in mind: "The primary objective and goal in the reopening of schools are to minimize the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19. 1. Assumptions: a. COVID-19 will not be totally eliminated, there will always be cases in our communities. 50 b. Every COVID-19 case cannot be prevented; need to manage spreading the disease." The best way to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 would be to have all online learning.

We didn't even have the option to have all online teaching. I think that option should be at least on the table. We have options of all face to face learning, blended, and hybrid learning, with some of those options requiring the students to learn online for more than half of the week; since there is an option for majority online learning and all face to face learning, then in theory there should be an option for all online learning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony and I hope you will take our voices into consideration.

--
Karly Kanehiro
9th grade Social Studies Teacher
James Campbell High School
Room D-102
(808)305-3760

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Gerald Kimura <22gkimura@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:40 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chair and Board Members,

I am writing to express my concerns about what I have been reading in the news about how the DOE plans to reopen the coming school year. My personal stake in this matter is my spouse as well as other family members are teachers or employees working in the schools.

During this time of covid 19 the CDC has stated that the only weapons we have to combat the covid 19 virus is facial coverings/masks, proper hygiene, and proper distancing from other people. As such the State of Hawaii mandates all businesses and establishments have proper protective gear, sanitation, and social distancing at their place of work.

Therefore before schools can reopen they must first have already procured enough personal protective gear, masks and face shields for use in school.

Another preventative measure we have is early detection. Therefore it should be that anyone entering the school grounds should be in masks, no exceptions as each living breathing person no matter how small poses a risk as a carrier of covid 19. Also as with the protocols at the medical facilities, temperature checks should be done to all entering the campus. Voluntary disclosure is not an option when non-disclosure can lead to illness and death.

I have heard that for certain age groups being able to recognize facial expressions is important in the learning process, therefore the decision for the lower grades to not be allowed to wear masks. That is totally unacceptable. Other ways should be explored to achieve this with the use of technology.

Proper and adequate sanitation supplies should be provided for each classroom. It should not be incumbent upon the teacher to procure their own disinfectant wipes and sprays. These should be provided as part of the reopening strategy of keeping all involved safe from covid.

Why is it that businesses are mandated to keep customers 6 feet apart, while in the school reopening plan it is calling for only 3 feet because everyone is facing in the same direction. If we are to maintain a 6 foot distance in the Costco line, with everyone facing the same way, why then is it ok for students to be only 3 feet apart? That is totally unacceptable. Again, every living breathing person is a potential carrier of covid.

As there may be numerous reasons to open the schools, the paramount and overriding factor to take into consideration is the safety of ALL persons on campus. students and faculty and staff alike all have a life and death stake in your decision.

--
Gerald Kimura

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

reopening plan

Emily Lethlean <emily.lethlean@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii DOE,

I know this is a hard time for all of us and tough decisions must be made. I'm in my 12th year of teaching since 2008 and it has never been easy but also never like this. Today we had our staff meeting and a vote on which model to use opening up schools in a few weeks. I want to submit my testimony regarding the 3 models we were asked to choose from. The fourth model is/should be a distance learning model.

Our school decided the first "face2face" model was impossible due to social distancing requirements. The third model would require us to hire 12 new teachers which we cannot find. Of course there is a teacher shortage and we have only been able to hire 5 new teachers.

Which leaves the second model of blended learning with 2 days on/3days off for the groups. None of these are acceptable as they do not follow CDC guidelines of 6 feet of distance, consistently wearing a mask and 4 weeks on the island without new cases.
New York City schools have already seen 74 staff die because of COVID-19. I normally teach up to 100 students a day. For the safety of the students, families and staff, I implore the DOE to be extremely cautious about reopening.

Sincerely,
Emily Lethlean
Teacher
Hawaii DOE

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 ft distance in classrooms

Jade Santos <santosjade06@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Pls keep us teachers our families, our students and their families safe by having a minimum 6 ft social distance in the classrooms!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Lorelei Kuheana <lkuheana@me.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am a 24 year teacher in the State of Hawaii. I teach 7th graders. I oppose the decision made to have student desks ONLY 3 feet apart in my classroom. That does not follow any of the CDC guidelines for 6 feet distancing. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. The HIGHEST risk of COVID spread. I was also told that I am not allowed to put up any plastic sheeting for protection. This is a disaster waiting to happen. What kind of education do you expect to take place in an atmosphere of FEAR!

I have 2 fragile kupuna and a 1 week old baby in my home. How do I make accommodations and considerations for my family? I don't have anywhere else to live if I get sick. I am thoroughly disappointed in your lack of concern for the health and well-being of Hawaii's Keiki and school staff. Please reconsider your decision in the midst of rising cases. SAFETY FIRST!

Lorelei Kuheana
Highlands Intermediate School
SY '20-'21

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ido Uto-Uko <idorenyin.utouko@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Idorenyin Uto-Uko

I am a teacher at Kailua Elementary School

My classroom is equipped to hold up to at least 26 students

Mahalo,

Idorenyin

sample BOE testimony.docx
14K

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is _____ and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at _____ Elementary and my children attend _____ Elementary.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I taught summer school this summer and attempted the 3 foot distance between desks with 1st graders and it was impossible to keep them from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. And this was with only 4 students in my summer class. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students.

My school says that we can fit up to 26 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time. Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. I want to send my children to school only if I know the school is going to enforce safe social distancing: which includes 6ft distance and required masks. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my children’s education, but their safety is priority. I am teaching my children how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same. It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

RusSkillz . <russell.ibera@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Mr. Russell Ibera. I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kapolei Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. Our state leaders have been constantly instructing the public to wear masks and to stand at least 6 feet part to prevent spreading of COVID-19. However, when it comes to our state's educators and children, we are told wearing a mask won't be mandatory and we're told to separare the students 3 feet apart? I can't help but to feel our leaders see teachers and their students as expendible. Wow.....just WOW! I am filled with worry if this is the set up for the next school year. One of my main fears is how.COVID-19 affects the respiratory system. Do you have asthma? Well, i do. Do you know how it feels when you can't easily breathe to take in oxygen to live in order to survive? Well, I do. Please reconsider your plans.

July 5, 2020

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

Let me have my students back. The same ones I said goodbye to in March. Let me teach them safely and seamlessly. I am a third grade teacher at Pukalani Elementary school and I am writing in consideration of elementary students and my beloved school ohana.

Superintendent Kishimoto made agreements with HSTA in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and defied those terms the next day, solely deciding on the safety and future for all of Hawaii's families. She proclaimed on a public broadcast that the agreements between HSTA and the DOE, will NOT be adhered to and is unacceptable. Promising that students would be in school for 180 days without guaranteeing face coverings and 6ft distance between desks was an irresponsible proclamation considering the pandemic affecting our community. It also violates the agreement made with HSTA. Furthermore, it was a decree that shames teachers for considering whether our own mortality is more important than the children we leave behind. More importantly, it was one that will divide families. Superintendent, how can wearing a mask be a "should" when everywhere else it is a "must"?

I worry that the families that have been adhering to the CDC's safety guidelines will pull their children out of school so their families do not have to be exposed non mask wearing children. So far, over *500 Maui families who have signed a petition calling for the resistance of mask wearing in our schools. This divide would leave classrooms full of students with families who don't take the CDC guidelines seriously, and with a deficit in the school budget from the parents who choose safety for their children by withdrawing their enrollment. Please visit the link on the bottom of this page. We need to meet the needs of ALL of our students, not just the needs of families who rely on school as a place to provide daily care for their children. We need to figure out how to support these families as well. We need leadership that considers the whole picture placing safety at the helm. Everyone deserves to be safe, students as well as teachers. We are expected to create a safe environment, it is part of our job description. The lenient expectations decided on by Superintendent Kishimoto without HSTA's agreement fall short for a safe return to school. They are unacceptable, and require retraction.

*https://www.change.org/p/department-of-education-stop-hawaii-schools-from-blended-distance-learning-and-unnecessary-regulations?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=93be7980-ba5d-11ea-b487-c11bba7c3138

We love being teachers.
We have thought about our students everyday. We have said their names in silent prayer, praying for their wellbeing, asking for the grace of God to fill their bellies so they don't have to feel the hunger that we know exists for so many of them. Countless teachers have volunteered to hand out meals, supplies, and books.

We love being teachers.
More than many of us have been planning for the unknown. We are researching and thinking and questioning. We are asking for donations through Donors Choose to help us safely meet the needs of our school family. We are thinking outside of the box, trying to be creative with possibilities.

We love being teachers but we are not willing to be part of an unsafe working and learning environment.

This is not a time to rush.
This is a time to reimagine education.
Reevaluate timelines.

Teachers could pick up right up where they left off, meeting with their former students online, while supporting kindergarten teachers with the teachers whose students have moved on. This would eliminate the need for students to navigate a new classroom setup, as well as it would save time building relationships. Logins stay the same, grade level learning continues where it left off until further notice. This is a time to come together, to care for the children of this community with aloha and safe measure.

We need a reasonable plan that considers the safety and security of our delicate island community. The DOE needs to invest in a decision and commit to seeing it through. Lip service will not keep us safe. We need a full time online option for families and scenarios that allow for safe spacing inside the confined walls of the very hot classrooms we willingly serve in. We need to protect our teachers, our families, and all of the people who hold our schools together. If face coverings and safe distances can not be mandated as laid out in the MOU then we need safer options. Doing so will serve the entire island. Parents deserve to be told the truth, they deserve answers and protection, so do we.

Mahalo for taking these points into consideration,

Miriam Clarke, MEdT
3rd grade teacher at Pukalani Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Fwd: Testimony

Richard Kartchner <pukarick@me.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

> I am a retired teacher, so I've had some experience with children. They are active, and do not just sit in a school environment. I understand a statement was made about cutting the CDC 6 foot distance in half! WHY?? No one has ever stated that now half the distance is good. Is the plan to get all the teachers (and children) to get ill, then say you didn't understand? Costco, Longs, Target, Safeway all have this idea that following the CDC code is safest for their customers. NO ONE has stated that closer is better! We know that even under the best of circumstances, children cannot stay apart all day long, especially not 3 feet apart, and truly the 6 feet boundary everyone else knows about, will be encroached by the children. I truly do not understand the purpose of this halving the CDC required distancing. We have so few teachers, and all you are doing is making sure they get the COVID 19 virus. Can you explain in any meaningful way, why you believe this is a solution?
> It feels like a decision to save money is at the base of this. I propose that you, Ms. superintendent sit in a closed room, with a dozen children for a day, and see if they could sit facing forward all day, 3 feet apart. Have you inquired how any parent feels about making their child sit too close to another person, then come home to perhaps a newborn sibling, or a health impaired relative in their home? I can only see lawsuits for the school, and the heartbreak of knowing you are responsible for people getting sick and perhaps dying. Is the school system going to pay for any hospitalizations of teachers or students? Things are hard enough without purposefully making people walk into a dangerous situation.
> 1. What is the liability the DOE has for this decision? Will teachers and parents sign a waiver?
> 2. If a teacher gets ill, will the time they are home or hospitalized be part of sick leave? Is This a condition of employment? What responsibility do you have for teachers with chronic health issues like diabetes? My daughter had cancer last year...
> 3. What is the DOE responsibility If the teacher or child brings home the disease and thereby creates a cluster contact situation?
> 4. Can a teacher sue if they become ill, and suffer permanent lung/heart damage but still survive?
> 5. Who will replace any stricken teacher and will they have to sign a waiver?Will you pack more children in, because there is no one else?
> 6. What happens if all your teachers ask for hazardous duty pay? Will you pay this? Will you carry extra insurance for covering this unsafe demand?
> 7. Will DOE assume full responsibility for ICU treatment costs or burial costs?
> I sincerely hope and pray that you at the very least will agree to the 6 feet distancing policy that is from the CDC. Please consider your staff that worked tirelessly at the drop of a hat to do online teaching by abiding to the agreed 6 feet distancing!
I remain willing to discuss this further, should you need more, with a mask, distant from you by 6 feet.
Jean Kartchner
>
>
> Sent from my iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening of school

SM Yahoo <sierramahin@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:10 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Sierra Mahin. I was born and raised in Hawaii and I have been a teacher for over 20 years. I am not comfortable going back to work with the 3 feet apart rule. My students should be kept 6 feet apart from each other and from me. I should have half of my class in the room at any time. I usually have 20-23 Kindergarteners every year. I could see 10-12 students fitting comfortably in my classroom but no more. Just because their desks are facing forward doesn't mean their heads are not going to turn to talk to each other. Three feet is too close. I would be risking contracting COVID-19. My boyfriend is high-risk and I can't come home worrying that I'm spreading the virus to him. We need to think about the health and safety of our students, their families, ourselves and our own families. I'm wondering about what I'm going to do if I am forced to go into a full classroom. I may need to resign from being a teacher. Please rethink this and make a better decision.
Aloha,
Sierra Mahin
Kindergarten Teacher, Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please inform us; is this information still true?

SLKFB Bonk <sandylkfb@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/04/09/breaking-news/hawaii-public-schools-to-remain-closed-until-state-goes-4-weeks-without-new-covid-19-cases/

Thank you for all you are doing to try to protect us.

Sandy

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kylie Nishino <kylie.nishino@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:16 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hi,

I am providing my testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Kylie Nishino and I'm an educator at Mauka Lani Elementary School.

Why should K-12 schools in Hawaii not follow the directions from CDC? We are not only putting students in a situation that could turn for the worse but also their families and especially us educators. As an educator, 3ft may seem reasonable for some people but knowing that an elementary school student is being asked to stay away 3ft and having to learn what 3ft is will be difficult. We all know kids that they cannot stay apart from their friends. They don't understand that we are trying to keep them safe and not away from their friends. As an educator I feel that if the rest of the world is following what the CDC is saying as the minimum why should schools be exempt from this. Everyone should be following the regulations that's we are receiving from the CDC.

--
Kylie Nishino
Mauka Lani Elementary
4th Grade Teacher, GLC

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7/9/2020

Hawai‘i Board of Education
Attn: Chair Catherine Payne
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: Comments on DOE’s Re-Entry Plan, approved by BOE: 6/18/2020

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s re-entry criteria for the 20-21 SY, in light of the on-going COVID-19 crisis.

We recognize the difficult and unprecedented time. We know it is difficult to develop and determine a course of action that will work for everyone. However, we also believe our students, their parents, and our teachers have a right to feel safe while accessing quality educational instruction. Many of our concerns will likely be echoed by the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association (HSTA), parents, and concerned members of our community. To simplify our requests and suggestions, we have attached guidelines from the Minnesota DOH, as a sample of acceptable criteria, which can be accessed at: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf

Additionally, with regard to our special-needs students, their teachers, aides, & specialists, we ask you to:

1. Consider ways to accommodate the needs of children and families at risk for serious illness from COVID-19, such as offering a fully online option, including IEP related services (e.g., Speech, OT, ABA, PT, etc.) as one available option. As reported by the Superintendent on Hawai‘i News Now (7/6/20), at least 16% of families k-12 have indicated in a survey they would prefer a completely online option for their children. “No student should be excluded from school unless required in order to adhere to local public health mandates or because of unique medical needs. Pediatricians, families, and schools should partner together to collaboratively identify and develop accommodations, when needed” (AAP, 2020, https://tinyurl.com/AAPCovidSchools). We also encourage the state to offer teaching staff, who cannot be at work due to their own high-risk conditions, alternatives for working on school campuses (e.g., such as virtual or remote instructional modalities).

2. Require masks that cover the nose and mouth be worn by students who can reliably wear them. Students who cannot wear a mask, should be encouraged to wear face covering. “Face shields may be an option for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. Transparent masks may be the best option for both teachers and students in

classes for deaf and hard of hearing students. They may also be useful for teachers and younger students who rely on visual / facial cues" (Mass DESE, 6/25/2020, https://www.mass.gov/doc/dese-fall-reopening-guidance/download).

3. Ensure desks are a minimum of 6 feet apart, as recommended by the Center for Disease Control. However, please note there are some situations where our students will need hands-on support; particularly younger students and students with special needs. "It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines should meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis" (AAP, 2020). Teachers should continue to interact with students in ways that will ensure safety for all (e.g., preventing elopement, assisting during a fire drill, etc.).

4. Provide teachers access to staffing coverage to leave the room to wash their hands and sanitize the environment, as often as needed. Ensure classroom access to hand hygiene products (e.g., hand sanitizer, soap, tissues, disinfectant wipes). "When possible, only products labeled as safe for humans and the environment (eg, Safer or Designed for the Environment), containing active ingredients such as hydrogen peroxide, ethanol, citric acid, should be selected from this list, because they are less toxic, are not strong respiratory irritants or asthma triggers, and have no known carcinogenic, reproductive, or developmental effects" (AAP, 2020).

5. Implement temperature checks, especially for students who have difficulty communicating pain or discomfort. Consider conducting temperature checks at the start of the school day and towards the end of the day. Communicate with nursing staff and caregivers immediately if there are concerns.

6. Develop and communicate protocols for visitors to follow when on campus. Develop and disseminate provisions and protocols to enable in-person evaluators and advocates safe access to school campuses, particularly for our students with special needs.

7. Continue with virtual platforms for 504 and IEP meetings. Consider creating and disseminating clear guidelines such as the ones outlined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/college-and-career-ready-ieps/learning-resources/virtual-iep-meetings.

We ask that this feedback be taken into consideration when revising or redrafting future re-entry plans for the upcoming school year, as well as the additional questions and concerns related to special education, which we feel have been clearly articulated in this letter by the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) for Loudoun County Public Schools (https://tinyurl.com/LCPS-SEAC-COVID). Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the information we have submitted.

Sincerely,

Lara Bollinger, J.D., BCBA, LBA
Vice President, Together For Our Keiki
On behalf of the Board, Advocates, & Ambassadors
forourkeiki@gmail.com

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry, https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/?fbclid=IwAR0jXHWWzAFzTj1gnISODULhB7ZA1eb0khKzc4Y0ML7k64dglpo62hmuAhU

Loudoun County Public Schools, Special Education Advisory Council Letter, https://tinyurl.com/LCPS-SEAC-COVID

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance, 6/25/2020, https://www.mass.gov/doc/dese-fall-reopening-guidance/download

Minnesota Department of Health, www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Conducting Parent Friendly & Productive Virtual IEP Meetings, https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/college-and-career-ready-ieps/learning-resources/virtual-iep-meetings

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Virtual IEP Checklist, https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/virtual-iep-mtg-checklist.pdf

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Iolani Kuoha <kuohaiolani1@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kakou,

My name is ʻIolani Kuʻoha and I am the Hawaiian Language Immersion teacher at Molokaʻi Middle School, I am testifying on the Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.** I have to deal with three different schools; Kualapuu Elementary School (my youngest child attends), Molokaʻi Middle School (my workplace) and Molokaʻi High School (where my two older sons attend).

I strongly support the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommending that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk.** The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. I have also included a link from our HSTA.

https://www.hsta.org/News/Recent-Stories/hsta-allowing-3-foot-distancing-in-classrooms-is-dangerous?fbclid=IwAR3eLpxL88VHkJm9dsAT7dibQUcUGu9WuLMELYPwJ1cJjQ5i_n_npoVOgW8

Mahalo and I hope you will take into consideration what was shared.

Please stay safe and healthy,

ʻIolani Kuʻoha

ʻO Hina i ka Malama, Ke Kula Waena

Molokaʻi Middle School
2175 Lihipali Avenue
POB 434
Hoʻolehua, Hawaiʻi 96729
(808)774-8546
Iolani.kuoha@k12.hi.us

I maikaʻi ke kalo i ka ʻōhā.
The goodness of the taro is judged by the young plant it produces.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 Feet Classroom Desk Distance

ellnjt.wong <ellnjt.wong@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:23 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sir:

If 6 feet is the agree upon distance between desk, it should be from end of desk to the next end of desk not middle of text to next middle of desk.

Everyone at the schools should be wearing a mask, including Administration.

Agreed upon guidelines between the Dept. Of Education and HSTA should be adhered to for the safety of the school's children, teachers, Admin., other personnel and everyones' families.

Sincerely,
Laurie Wong
808 754-2536

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony

Jenny Wada <jwada124@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The following is my testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My name is Jennifer Wada and I am a student services coordinator at Kaunakakai Elementary School on the island of Molokai.

I have been monitoring the discussions between my union, HSTA, and the Department of Education and was feeling some measure of confidence that the two parties came up with an agreement that might work for our keiki and school community. However, when the press conference came out with Dr. Kishimoto stating that schools could modify down to 3-feet of spacing as long as students are facing forward, it completely caught me off guard. Have you ever seen kindergarteners sit facing forward for any length of time? Even when reminded repeatedly? How could there be an agreement that clearly stated 6-feet of separation between and among students and staff members turn into 3-feet overnight? This is not safe!

The information regarding Covid-19 is changing daily, however, the recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have NOT changed; they recommend **that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk.** No where on the CDC website, especially in regards to schools reopening, is there a recommendation of desks 3 feet apart. This is unacceptable and the 6-feet standard, as agreed upon, must be implemented.

If the safety of our students and school community is not the priority it will negatively impact all operations... Parents, teachers, and school personnel will not feel safe in the schools. I know this will also force some into early retirement or changing professions. In my household, my counselor husband is strongly considering retiring if safety conditions are not in place as he is in a number of high risk categories; we also are concerned with the additional exposure to his parents (88 & 87 years old) who live in our home.

Again, for the safety of students, their families, the school community, and my own family, please insist that 6 feet spacing be implemented on school campuses including in classrooms.

Thank you,
Jennifer Wada
Student Services Coordinator
Kaunakakai Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

School return.

Trisha Aiu <aiutrisha@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:39 PM
Reply-To: "aiutrisha@yahoo.com" <aiutrisha@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

As a mother, i dont feel safe sending my already asthmatic children to school ifnits 3 feet apart. If my kids are put at risk who do we blame???? Ive already lived under quarantine from March and just recently started going on outside acti ities and still social distancing. It is not safe for any children until this covid is under control. Please take into co sideration this matter. 6 feet apart ok not 3 feet.

Mahalo. A very concerned Mother.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Testimony

Susan Agsalda <slagsalda@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” I am submitting testimony as a concerned kindergarten teacher. I have been teaching at Kipapa Elementary for the past 18 years.

I am over 60 years old, have a medical condition that places me in the high-risk category, and I am a co-care provider for my 92 year-old parent. As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that less than 6 feet distancing is enough space between children, to keep a safe distance from each other, as well as, from faculty and staff.

With less than 6’ distancing, students may still be able to extend their arms out and touch the person/child next to them. Teachers were not asked if less than 6’ of distancing was possible, practical, or prudent. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children, especially younger children who have not had school experience, cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing or personal hygiene practices.

Classrooms and class sizes differ. It may not be possible to socially distance children in the space available, and it will be a risk for all in the classroom with decreased distancing.

Managing the classroom will be difficult for the entire duration of instructional time. Teachers already deal with classroom management issues in getting children to stay at their desks and work, even under normal circumstances. It will take more time and energy to enforce safe social distancing in a classroom with 3’ of spacing rather than 6’, and that will also take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, we are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when a child has a fever. Based on past experience, many young children who are new to the school system, do not always vocalize that are not feeling well. I’ve also come across many instances in which the parent is aware that their child has a fever, yet sends him/her to school. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is ludicrous. The approximate cost of a non-contact thermometer is about $40 – 50. The peace of mind is priceless.

If masks and 6’ distancing is mandated for the general public, why are teachers expected to teach with less than 6’ distancing and masks as an option? Are teachers and their keiki less valuable than others in the general public? Will 6’ distancing and masks be required after the death of the first teacher from school-contracted Covid-19? All lives matter.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Agsalda

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY for July 9, 2020 meeting

Mireille Ellsworth <ellsworthhsta@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

TESTIMONY to the Hawai'i State Board of Education
General Meeting - Thurs. July 9, 2020 1:00 PM

ITEM IV (A): Reopening of Schools for SY 20-21
Position: **DELAY REOPENING to ensure health and safety**

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board:

My name is Mireille Ellsworth, teacher at Waiakea High School for the past 17 years.

I am appalled at the lack of concern for the health and safety of students and teachers by planning for face-to-face sessions, especially the TIMING of the first day, Aug. 4. What is the rush? We MUST delay reopening campuses until we have control of our CoVid-19 cases and until we have seen how tourist arrivals affect those numbers for the following reasons:

- It can take up to **3 to 4 weeks** for those who have caught the virus **to show symptoms**.
- Schools have not had time to solicit feedback from families regarding **how many students will choose the 100% distance learning** option. (This information is necessary to schedule students' classes and make adjustments)
- Schools are not able to assure faculty and staff that the **supply chain** is reliable and sustainable for disinfecting wipes (needed for devices), hand sanitizer, masks, and other **needed supplies**. Schools that run out should close.
- In secondary schools where children change classes, there is **not ample time to clean devices** between groups of students. Devices in the classroom are essential since many teachers will not feel comfortable collecting papers from students considering the contagious nature of the virus.
- Social distancing needs to be a minimum of **6 feet for 360 degrees**. (Haven't you seen the circles on park lawns to socially distance people in the media? They are CIRCLES!)
- Classroom **teachers with existing health issues that put them at risk for DYING** or who are older are not being afforded the opportunity to do their job online, but students do.
- **Masks MUST be required!** If a student cannot wear one for health reasons, they should not be in school for the first couple of months at least to make sure our campuses are safe.
- There are mental health issues to consider. How can you expect **teachers** to be effective if they are **afraid of their students** who could be asymptomatic vectors and spreaders of disease that could be FATAL?
- In a school setting, any one student could end up being a **superspreader**, especially when **fans are utilized in classrooms** blowing around aerated droplets that could carry infection!
- Most schools around the U.S. start school after Labor Day and end in June. That could give HIDOE more time to address concerns and keep children and adults on campus safer.

I am in the process of applying for ADA accommodations, but only ONE Civil Rights Compliance Officer is supposed to interview the doctors of all applicants from the entire Big Island. That process will unlikely be completed by August 4.

I did not survive a ruptured spleen, an abdominal hernia, a detached small intestine, and breast cancer to die or have more health issues simply because of the reckless decisions of this board. It is tragic that I would have to **choose between my livelihood and my LIFE** in the next few weeks. (And I thought my greatest risk of dying at school was from a school shooter. Being a teacher is getting too hazardous!) Why are you insisting on rushing the reopening? I implore you, slow down and do it right.

Mireille Ellsworth,
Classroom Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Darice Carvalho <dlcarvalho68@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:31 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,
My name is Darice Carvalho and I am a teacher at Waimea Elementary School on the Big Island. I am testifying in regards to discussion item VI (A). On June 27, 2020 HSTA reached an agreement for reopening schools with the State Department of Education. In this agreement, it was agreed that schools would maintain a distance of six feet (which means student desk would be distanced that far apart). Then the DOE comes out on July 2,2020 stating that student desk can be distanced 3 feet apart. I feel that this is going against what the DOE agreed upon with HSTA. How can the DOE come to an agreement on June 27th and then change it several days later? They should not have the right to change the social distancing measures without negotiating this with HSTA. Also, in public we are required to use 6 feet in social distancing and use a mask. This should be the same for a classroom and school setting. Students and teachers will be indoors for majority of the day and when you are indoors it is more important to have that distance of six feet. Besides being a teacher, I have to help care for a parent who is at a higher risk for COVID-19. I can not afford to get COVID as I will without a doubt be passing it on to my parent. As well as be out of school to recover from it. Being out of the classroom will make it difficulty to educated my students and with a limited amount of subs this will make it harder for my students to get the learning that they need. This is why the six feet of social distancing needs to be in place.
Also in the DOE's reopening plan, it was stated that there could be two students seated on a bus seat. I also feel that this does not allow for "any" social distancing. This is going to increase the spread of COVID. If a school ends up with a COVID-19 outbreak, this would make it harder to trace those who maybe impacted and need to be tested. If we are trying to limit the mixing of groups, why would you let students who are in different classes be allowed to sit next to each other on a bus seat. Sitting on a bus needs to be social distanced by at least sitting students on every other seat.
I highly urge the BOE, to consider this and make the DOE change the social distancing to six feet as well as seating on the bus. If this isn't changed, I can see many schools who will end up with an outbreak which will lead to schools having to shut down. That's what this reopening of schools plan from the DOE will lead to. If the BOE doesn't want to have this happen then you "must" change these two items for the health and safety of teachers, students and their families.
Thank you!
Darice Carvalho

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Lorrie Taylor <lorriemt@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

I would like to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools 2020-2021 school year. My name is Lorrie Taylor. I am an Educational Assistant at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle school. I am a one-on-one assistant for the Kindergarten Special Education Department.

I would like to begin by expressing my extreme anxiety regarding the opening of face to face school classes on August 4, 2020. I have read over the plan for bringing kids back to the classrooms and I feel a great deal of incongruity between reality and what will be expected.

If you have worked in a kindergarten setting before you know there are many challenges. The reality of having a five to six year old wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing is not reasonable. Now imagine that in a special educational environment. The exact things that the CDC has recommended for safe practices will be difficult if not impossible to maintain. My concern is not only for the children but for the teachers and other staff that will be exposed daily to many children. Many of our staff include older individuals that would be in the high risk group, not to mention those who have other family members who may be at risk from the contact staff receives. The discussion on contact tracing and the idea that each teacher will have a bubble of contact will not hold for other staff members. EAs travel to many areas of the campus and have contact with many individuals on a daily basis. The thought that trace should be straight-forward implies that cases will occur.

Contact concerns me as we are seeing numbers here climb again. The mainland is seeing large increases in cases, enough that hospitals are full. We have just crossed another holiday weekend of gatherings and parties that could cause our numbers to climb even higher. This coupled with the majority of our student's parents working in tourism related fields and the opening of tourism on August 1, 2020 will increase the bubbles exponentially. How can it be considered safe to go back to school now? It was not safe for us in March.

While I enjoy my job and know the children are missing friends and a "normal" educational setting, I do not feel that taking the risk of face to face classes will benefit anyone. We will be facing some difficult decisions for the future but one of those should not be risking our lives, those of our students, or those of our families.

Mahalo,
Lorrie Taylor

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

COVID-19 School Policy

Dennis Takeshita <dennis.t.takeshita@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:00 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.” My name is Dennis Takeshita and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Wahiawa Middle School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I know people who taught summer school this summer and attempted the 3 foot distance between desks with 1st graders and it was impossible to keep them from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. And this was with only 4 students in their summer class. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 20+ students.

My school says that we can fit up to 26 students “comfortably” with 3 feet apart from chair to chair. That is unrealistic and not practical. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. With 3ft distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. As teachers in the classroom we were not asked if that was possible or practical. We interact with the kids daily and we know how children cannot sit still for long periods of time and how they are not as cautious or aware of practicing safe social distancing. If the universities are sticking to the 6ft distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?
To squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible for our classroom management to really monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time.

Teachers already deal with classroom management to have kids stay at their seats and work even in normal circumstances. The amount of time and energy that will need to be used to enforce safe social distancing in the classroom will take away from valuable instruction time.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. For us to be asked to rely on our visual assessments is very frustrating. We are not health professionals and we cannot visually see when someone has a fever. We should not let students enter school without first checking their temperature, possibly exposing others until we see a cough or sneeze. Non-contact thermometers only cost about $40. But the peace of mind and safety precaution is priceless.

Hawaii is a state with multigenerational families all under one roof, especially in Wahiawa/Whitmore. It is not safe nor responsible for students to be exposed frequently to so many others without appropriate social distancing measures and PPE. Some of my students only have grandma and grandpa. We must ensure that everyone in the community is protected.

It is no fault to any child that isn’t as careful with social distancing, they are children and don’t know any better. That is why I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Dennis Takeshita

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet distance is not enough!

Edwina Hall <ehall2680@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Edwina Hall and I have a daughter who attends Kapolei High School and she will start the 10th grade this year. I also have 2 other children in my household. I am concerned about the "3ft rule" and how effective it would be. How can you guarantee that this would be safe. My daughter has had severe asthma since she was a baby. I am afraid of her not only going to school one day and contracting this virus but bringing it in to the home to give to the other children.

I ask that the DOE come up with better solutions to this problem or have the children continue to do home school until the COVID 19 is under control in our state and nation. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Regards,

Edwina Hall

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jody Field <ykanegurl@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:10 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Will training be offered for security guards as in regards to breaking up fights, picking up and transporting sick, injured and unruly students.

How will the bus insure social distancing and safety for our students.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

July 9, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Testimony for BOE Agenda, July 9, 2020,1:30 p.m., Agenda Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

I am a former first grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary School, having retired as of July 1. Although I will not be in the classroom in the coming year, I am writing because of my concerns over the plans to reopen our schools.

With the nation facing increasing numbers of cases of the corona virus, the upcoming opening for travel into the state, and the uptick of cases and community spread within the state, I would like us to be sure that our reopening is measured and safe. While I understand the importance of being able to teach the children in person and that there is pressure to reopen schools so our parents can go back to work, it does no one any good to open up in a manner that is less safe and leads to the spreading of disease and a subsequent re-closure of schools.

I respect the members of the Departments of Health and Education and their efforts to work on the opening of schools, but I am concerned about the language that strays from the best practices for limiting the spread of the disease. The DOE has suggested that students may be placed 3 feet apart if at desks facing in the same direction. Notwithstanding the fact that it would be difficult to keep students facing in the same direction, 3 feet is inconsistent with CDC guidelines and the language in the Memorandum of Understanding between the HSTA and the Department of Education, where it is specified that efforts should be made to keep students 6 feet apart.

In addition, the DOH has made suggestions against the wearing of face masks in class for students in grades K-2. I agree that accommodation in terms of masks – perhaps the use of face shields – are important in order to teach phonics and reading in the lower grades. However, again, the use of masks is endorsed by current CDC guidelines, and it would be easier if we start with an understanding that masks should be worn and allow for limited exceptions as needed.

School closure was hard. It was harder to teach and to reach each child. We all wished for the time when we could be together in a classroom without masks. But we cannot let that wishful thinking drive us away from doing what is needed to prevent the spread of disease. As with the reopening of businesses and other places, when opening up our schools, we cannot throw out what we know from science.

When we reopen, it will not be ideal. It will be more difficult and take more time and resources to teach as we deal with the health and safety and the emotional issues brought on by the pandemic. Still, if we follow the best practices, hopefully, we can prevent the spread of the corona virus and at some point, be able to move to less restrictive measures. We can take our children and our current condition from where they are and work to make the best of this difficult situation.

Sincerely,
Lynn M. Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii

To Whom it May Concern,

As the 2020-21 school year fast approaches there are many concerns that must be addressed prior to the reopening of our education system. The foremost concern is that both the DOE and BOE are choosing to not follow CDC guidelines to maintain optimum safety for all. The "bubble" that Dr. Bruce Anderson has mentioned does not exist. Covid doesn't just stop transmitting because of a perceived but non-existent "bubble" of safety.

If just one Covid positive person attends school the results could be catastrophic. We have seen this time and again when community spread occurs within whole households and the larger communities around the world, including day care centers (Texas: over 1,300 cases), summer fun programs (Hawaii) and in countries that chose to open and then were forced to reclose schools due to Covid outbreaks (Israel, Japan and China). In my town alone, community spread forced the shutting down and deep cleaning of three McDonald's restaurants due to Covid spread at the establishment and within family clusters.

As an educator I am well aware of the DOE's "Back to School" plan. One of the key parts of the agreement that the state Department of Education (DOE) made with the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) is that students and teachers will keep a six feet of distance while wearing a mask as is done in any other social situation. State requirements include wearing a mask and maintaining a six foot distance while out in the public, in restaurants, bars, while shopping and so forth. Yet at the same time teachers, support staff, our administrators and students are to expose themselves to a mere three feet of distance while wearing masks is not required in the most dangerous of situations - enclosed structures.

HSTA recently found out that the DOE rewrote the agreement that was released on Thursday July 1, stating a THREE FOOT distance WITHOUT MASKS as the requirement inside of classrooms and that no masks should be worn by students during recess. (https://bit.ly/3f4Pli). This is NOT SAFE for anyone. Our own Department of Health representatives Dr. Park and Dr. Anderson, as well as our Lieutenant Governor Dr. Green have stated as much many times on various news outlets. Our Department of Health (DOH) has chosen to ignore the Center for Disease Control (CDC) safety standards of six feet of distance and mask wearing in enclosed areas (classrooms and other school buildings). As a result, our DOE has chosen to ignore the same CDC safety guidelines. Why is this the case?

This is a direct violation of our contract and the teacher union (HSTA) is 100% against starting school unsafely this coming August 4.

I want to teach, but only if it SAFE for my students, their families, myself, my staff, and my family. We all have loved ones that are high risk. Anyone can be a Covid carrier. Not wearing a mask at all times for both students and staff is not acceptable. Not maintaining six foot distance is not acceptable.

Many of the staff members and their respective family members at my school are high risk. Personally, my Mom, my wife and her parents are among those that are high risk. Covid does not suddenly cease to spread because our clients are children, nor will three feet and no mask in classrooms protect my loved ones when I get home.

Mahalo for your support!

Mr. Richard W. Swangel
ELA Department Head
Kealakehe Intermediate School

Testimony

Lisa Espiritu <llespiritu79@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:15 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Lisa Espiritu and I am testifying as both a teacher and a parent of school-aged children. I teach at Nimitz Elementary and my children attend Nimitz Elementary and Moanalua High School.

I am extremely concerned about the wording in the HIDOE's Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan Health and Safety Handbook. On page 4 it states, "Maintain a distance of at least three feet between seats, including group tables, if students are facing the same direction." On page 6 it also states, "However, if students are sitting three feet apart, and facing the same way, wearing a mask is not required." The distance of three feet is again mentioned on page 6 stating, "When students are not wearing a mask, they should avoid close proximity (minimum three feet apart without facing each other) during group activities such as choir, band and exercising (physical education). It was clearly agreed upon in the MOU between HSTA and the DOE that 6ft social distancing would be implemented. In section 1.b.iii. it states, "Schools are worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread. This effort includes reducing opportunity for the spread of respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze, by maintaining six feet or two arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces..." No place within the MOU, was there an agreement on 3 feet distancing.

The CDC recommends, "To practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces." To say that it would be safe for students to be sitting 3 feet from one another without wearing masks is outrageous! As a teacher I can guarantee you that even if student desks are facing the same direction, the students will move around in their seat and turn their heads. They are living people, not statues! Students turn to one another to talk and of course will turn their head to sneeze or cough. Also, students will need to get up from their seats from time to time, and seats being 3 feet apart will mean students will be almost on top of one another if one gets up to move. I understand the importance of getting students back into a physical classroom, but we need to do so in a way that will not jeopardize their health.

I understand the idea of "cohorts" or "bubbles", and they are a great idea to try to minimize spread. However, we cannot pretend that these "cohorts" or "bubbles" are safe spaces with no risk. We cannot assume everybody within them is virus free and act as if they are an extension of our own households. With a blended model, I will have about 11 students in my classroom each day. Each of those students does not only go to school and home. Many are exposed to a great number of people through child care, sports, church, family gatherings, in-restaurant dining, parties, and the list goes on. Each cohort's safety level will vary greatly based on the actions of each family that is within it. I also have 3 school-aged children, which will also be part of one of these cohorts. That means my family can be affected by the actions of at least 44 families. My family has taken very strict precautions to minimize our exposure to COVID-19. If we are part of a cohort where the families within do not share the same level of precaution as we do, we are at great risk. This concerns me for the safety of my family, my students and their families, and my co-workers. This is why we must still adhere to social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times, even within "cohorts" or "bubbles".

I ask that the Board of Education urge the Department of Education to do what is right and return to the agreed upon 6 foot minimum social distancing as outlined in the MOU with HSTA. Please remember that our first priority is always the safety of our students and teachers.

Mahalo,
Lisa Espiritu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

S.M. Yamauchi <sm.yamauchi@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**.

My name is Shirley Yamauchi. My son is Taizo Cailing, enrolled to begin his gr. K year at Mauka Lani ES. My stepson Braden Cailing just graduated virtually from Kapolei HS.
My workplace is Kapolei Middle, where I am about to begin my 21st year of teaching.

I am demanding that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

Back in 1992, I moved away from the Big Island, a large part having to do with my lifelong respiratory issues. I've had allergies and asthma as far back as 1978. Now with the reopening of schools being pushed back to August 4th, as I am a multi-track school teacher, I am deeply concerned with the possibility of the six feet separation reduced to three feet. Principal Richard Fajardo told our teachers on July 1, that a separation of 4.5 feet will be allowed at Kapolei Middle since he personally measured out the areas himself. HSTA President Corey Rosenlee and Leeward uniserv director Jonathan Leibowitz both urged me to fill out the ADA request form, due to my pre-existing **respiratory** condition. Dr. Bradley Lee of Kapolei has already composed a "no-fly" letter to Delta Airlines, as I was scheduled to travel to Atlanta, GA in late June 2020.

Kapolei Middle first opened in 1999, with central air conditioning from the very beginning. Windows are located at the very top of the walls in the three main grade-level buildings. Portables have individual air conditioning units and windows with louvers. Principal Fajardo has also suggested that air conditioning will be turned off during work hours and electric fans may or may not be allowed. As I drove through the town of Kapolei today during the afternoon lunch hours, I noticed temperatures of 87-89F. I was in an air-conditioned car, not a classroom with 29 grade seven students and no air conditioning, three small windows and two doors. Now the concern includes separating the 29 students with a space of 3-4.5 feet between them.

As an educator friend of mine from Ewa Beach expressed to me, "I feel like we're on the Titanic where rich people got to leave, but poor people had to stay." As she compared the HIDOE's plans to private school Punahou's plan. As a public school educator and wife to a store merchandiser, we cannot afford $26,000 a year to send our kindergartner to Punahou. Though I have resided in Hawaii for 45 years and going into my 21st year with the HIDOE, my son and I will be treated as the poor passengers aboard the doomed Titanic.

Thank you,

Shirley M. Yamauchi
HSTA Leeward Chapter President
Hawaii State Teachers Association, Leeward
Cell: (808) 387-7281

https://yesforourkeiki.com/why/
https://www.stitchfix.com/referral/13325745
http://www.isecretshop.com/register/1112247

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft vs 6 ft rule

lori m <fuji249@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:27 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I personally do not agree with the DOE and BOE's decision on altering the guidelines. If the CDC gave the 6 ft rule in which every state should be following, then school's should follow those guidelines too. I feel like we are putting ourself and our families into danger. Also, I read the opening guidelines and I think it is so controversial. In one section it says all adults to wear masks, in another section it's very laced and okay to not wear in the classroom.
I also read that students don't have to wear masks. I think it should be mandated unless they receive a doctor's note. Children in the younger grades like Pre-k to 1st are the very ones to get people sick because they need to be taught good hygiene.
I don't want to be responsible towards others if I am the carrier and give the virus to others in my family, students or to strangers. Or worse, if I were to get sick and end up on a ventilator.
Thank you,
Lori

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tigger Roo <tiggerroo2001@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:28 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello, my name is Ann Uyehara. I am writing to testify on discussion item VIIA-Presentation on Dept.of Education's Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
I am currently teaching at Hickam Elementary and have been a teacher since 1992. I do not agree with the three foot distance between students. I feel this will endanger the health of both teachers as well as students. This will definitely be a very easy way to spread COVID 19 and will end us back at square one where we will have to close our schools and go back to 100%virtual learning. This three feet distance is not enough to keep everyone protected against each other. Please rethink this and also keep in mind class size also. How can we expect to keep everyone protected and safe with this ludicrous option.
Thank you,
Ann Uyehara

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kayla Sakamoto <ksakamoto@westernu.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:33 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

- Kayla Sakamoto, DPT, physical therapist Leeward District Office. Campbell-kapolei and Nanakuli-waianae complex.
- Agenda item: VI. Discussion Items, A. Presentation of DOE's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools
- Position (comment with questions/concerns/ideas): I am wondering how you will address service providers who can't abide by 6ft distances as physical therapy is provided with direct contact to children. I know some schools will re-open and when I provide direct service I see multiple students in one day and usually go to at least 3 schools per day (I have about 16 schools total). If one of my students in the early morning had it (asymptomatically)... I have the potential to take it to 2 others schools... of course I would be washing hands, wearing a mask, etc. but how will that be addressed?

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening

estevesk22 <estevesk22@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:35 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

How will it look like for a Sped classroom that has 18 student's and 6 staff in a room all day with double desk to implement social distancing? Is it 6 feet apart, 3 feet there's so many different opinions, what's the protocol? What's the ratio of students in a classroom during a period?

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S8+.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

SherriAnn Wakui <stweety68@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello my name is SherriAnn Wakui , my position is an Educational Assistant III at a middle school.
I work with students face to face contact in the assigned classroom for the reopening of school. My questions is
Does admin have the right to assign EA's to a classroom non instructional time to supervise by themselves from 7:30am to 8:20am of 25 students ? Is this putting a risk for EA's? Should there be 2 EA's to supervise a classroom without a teacher ?
The bell schedule that the school has , does it follow our MOA? (10min break and 30min lunch).
The EA's were told the classrooms will be cleaned thoroughly afterschool and teachers could leave but we as EA's have to stay , but where are we being housed during the remainder of the work day ?
Our work time is 7:30 am -4:00pm .

Thank you ,
SherriAnn Wakui Unit 3/ EA

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

sandra davis <brownsmama@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,

Sandra Davis from Palisades Elementary. I am an EA and my question is how will you provide safety for us EA's since we do one to one with our students? We sit right with them and are their closest contact besides the teacher when they go up to their desk. Having a close contact with our students gives them a better understanding when we are helping them to understand in a general Ed classroom.

Please let us know how you will protect us.

Thank you,
Sandra Davis

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Lokelani Han <dlokelani.han@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:41 PM

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.**

Davelyn Lokelani Han

My child will attend Molokaʻi High School in August

I am a teacher at Kualapuʻu Public Conversion Charter School, Kualapuʻu Molokaʻi

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk.** The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Please do not minimize the health and safety of our children OR our educators!!!!!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Heather Gostage <heather.gostage@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel like I am putting myself, family, and community at risk by having to teach in a classroom that is not socially distanced by at least 6 feet and masks or face shields are not mandatory. Unacceptable!!

Heather Gostage

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

MEC12006@hawaii.rr.com <MEC12006@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:44 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
My name is Marie Carter. I am a parent of a child who attends Mililani High School. I am also a teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I highly disagree with the plan announced by the Superintendent to allow school reopening with only a 3 foot social distancing requirement. I am also concerned that wearing of face masks seems to be optional. I should not feel like I'm risking my life when I'm at at my place of employment, nor should our students and their families be put at risk. The BOE and DOE needs to mandate at least a 6 foot social distancing plan and wearing of face masks. This is supported by the CDC and other health experts and I believe it will keep teachers, students, staff, and their families a little more safer in conjunction with other safety precautions as recommended by the CDC. Please make a responsible decision for everyone and their families. Mahalo.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Natalie V <natalie.sltx@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:44 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Natalie Vitale and I am a speech/language pathologist in the West Hawaii complex.

I realize that many of the procedures put in place are for the classrooms. However, as a related service provider, very little of that applies to me.

How am I as a related service provider supposed to safely provide services to my caseload of 50+ students in various classrooms? During a typical school year, I have to group students (that are not in the same classroom) in order to provide services that are on a child's IEP. If students are supposed to stay in their classroom, and I have to go into a room and see whatever students on my caseload that are in that room, it is not humanly possible to provide services to all my students.
If I to go into classrooms to provide services, not only will I not meet all of my legally mandated minutes, but I will also be going in and out of 20+ classrooms. For example, the school I am assigned to has seven kindergarten classrooms (and at least 5 classrooms for prek-6th grade). And rarely are students in the same classroom. So I will have to expose myself and travel from room to room. OR I could potentially put children at risk by pulling them from their classroom (that they are supposed to stay in all day) and grouping them with students in other classrooms. Either way, I feel like I am going to potentially cross contaminate myself and others.

There is no consideration for ANY related services providers (SLP, OT, PT) in the plans to open schools. Yet our minutes are legally mandated.

Special education teachers have not been expected to provide minute for minute services during teletherapy (to a caseload of less than 10 kids), yet related service providers are expected to meet all of the minutes on an IEP for 50+ students. If the minutes on an IEP are modified/forgiven for special education minutes, they should be for any related service that is on the IEP.

We were provided a plexiglass shield/stand by our DES. However this is not practical. Are related service providers supposed to carry this room to room? From school to school?

There are so many unanswered questions as to what the related service providers can do to protect themselves, students, and other staff. We are totally left out of all conversations and nothing has been put in writing for us as guidelines and/or protocols.

Thank you for your time,
Natalie Vitale

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Heather G <okinawa334@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel like I am putting myself, family, and community at risk by having my children in a classroom that is not socially distanced by at least 6 feet and masks or face shields are not mandatory. Unacceptable!!

Heather Gostage

"It doesn't matter if the glass is half empty or half full. Be thankful that you have a glass and grateful that there's something in it." ~Unknown

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Returning back to school

Laurie Marks <kiakonal001@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:48 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

How can the superintendent say on tv in front of many educators that it will not be required for students to wear mask in class. She can say that cuz she is not in the class with the students. What happens when students come to school with no mask? I am not comfortable returning to school under The superintendent's guidelines. The principal and other administrators who sit in their offices and not constantly with kids should be out with the kids and seeing what educators do. And for the change from 6feet to 3 feet Is insane. They need to rethink this.
--Laurie Marks

Testimony

Heather Gostage <heather.gostage@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel like I am putting myself, family, and community at risk by having to teach in a classroom that is not socially distanced by at least 6 feet and masks or face shields are not mandatory. Unacceptable!!

Heather GOSTAGE

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Joanie Tanabe <joanie.tanabe@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Name: Joanie Tanabe
School Children Attend: Kaunakakai Elementary & Molokai High School
Educator Workplace: Kilohana Elementary

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk.** The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Mahalo for your continued support and attention to this matter. Please help us provide an environment that ensures all of our keiki and kumu stay safe and healthy.

Aloha,

Joanie Tanabe

Testimony

Anthony Gayer <10005313@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:56 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Schools exist to safely educate and nurture kids. Safety and well-being should ALWAYS be our highest priority. We should not let our notion of perfect (every student on campus every day) get in the way of better (half the kids of a class every day). A 3ft distance between desks may be possible but that doesn't make it optimal for student and teacher health and well being. Risking increased chance of exposure in the name of getting parents out of the house to work is at the least short sighted and parochial minded; it is at its worst, unhealthy and potentially deadly to kids', their families, school staff and their families. Just because every kid, every day on campus may be doable, doesn't make It appropriate or best practice to execute in the midst of a pandemic with no vaccine, no reliable treatment and the reopening of our state to the mainland coinciding with school opening. We can't possibly value gym goers or restaurant goers lives more than our kids and their families. Yet we require a reduction in capacity to social distance in those settings for their safety, but encourage 100% capacity in each elementary school's classrooms. This is illogical and irresponsible and not the way I believe true leadership is realized on behalf of our students, their families and our school staff.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Angie Glogovsky <aglogovsky@me.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 5:57 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hawaii Board of Education,

I would like to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools 2020-2021 school year. My name is Angela Glogovsky. I am an Educational Assistant at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle school. I work in special ed preschool.

I would like to begin by expressing my extreme anxiety regarding the opening of face to face school classes on August 4, 2020. I have read over the plan for bringing kids back to the classrooms. The most recent statements about less-than-6-foot distancing are very concerning. Please do not allow carelessness and lax guidelines to define our reopening as the nation watches us succeed or fail on August 4.

The reality of having a three to five year old wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing is not reasonable. Now imagine that in a special educational environment. The exact things that the CDC has recommended for safe practices will be difficult if not impossible to maintain. My concern is not only for the children but for the teachers and other staff that will be exposed daily to many children.

August 1, 2020 will increase the bubbles exponentially. How can it be considered safe to go back to school now? It was not safe for us in March.

Mahalo,
Angela Glogovsky

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jody Spencer <jody.spencer@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Throughout my teaching career (38 years), “safety” is a word I don’t take lightly whether I teach in the classroom or out in the field.
With the COVID 19 still looming upon us, I’m glad that the state is taking measure to resume our SY 2020-21. However, I don’t agree with the 3’ distancing and the state should keep the social distancing at 6’. I believe are students, fellow colleagues and other staff members cannot be put at a greater risk with the states 3’ distancing. Today’s news on KHON2 just announced that the increase in cases are due to clusters of gathering and not practicing adequate distancing and truly believe that 3’ is not a safe measure for our students and everyone on our schools campuses. Please consider , thank you for whatever your reason maybe. Thank you

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3' 6' issue

Denise Webb <denisehwebb@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:10 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a special education teacher. I work to support students who have IEPs in inclusive settings, lower elementary. I am very concerned that:
a. we don't know the full implications of what Covid-19 does to children
b. 3' distance between students is not adequate distance: 6' is recommended in so many other venues (think the lines at stores). This is especially a concern as my administrator does not want wearing masks to be mandatory.
c. students as young as 5 and 6 years old will NOT adhere to the distance guidelines anyway. It's not developmentally expected.
d. Sped populations are often more vulnerable for any number of reasons.
e. I am not young. I live with vulnerable people. I am very frightened to bring Covid-19 home.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Joanie Tanabe <joanie.tanabe@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Name: Kelsie Tanabe
School Attend: University of Hawaii at Manoa

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk.** The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Mahalo for your continued support and attention to this matter. Please help us provide an environment that ensures all of our keiki and kumu stay safe and healthy.

Aloha,

Kelsie Tanabe

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony RE: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021

GB Hajim <hajim@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

My son attends Hilo High. Anything short of mandatory mask wearing and 6 foot distancing will deliberately put my child at risk and is unacceptable.

A plan that splits the classes in half for an alternating two day and then three day week alternating with the other half of the student body, with online classes is the only way to move forward without additional teachers and class space.

When the first child gets sick from this poor plan, you can expect lawsuits and they will be bigger than you can imagine if any children die.

Read Dr. Fauci's recommendations and move forward with sense!

Malama pono

GB Hajim
Papaikou, HI

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shakti Brickland <shaktibrickland@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:17 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI (A) : Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Covid 19 is getting worse in our state and most other states as well. Hawaii is about to open itself up to tourists and all the businesses involved in that field. This will no doubt spread the corona virus much further than it has yet spread. Keeping the schools closed can play a major role in curtailing the spread of this very contagious disease. Distance learning is what we should be planning for - to keep the teachers and students safe, and to try to limit further spread of this virus. Our schools are not designed for 6 feet distancing, young children can not be expected to keep their hands away from their face, wear a mask, or maintain social distancing. Many classes can be taught on line and this is what we should be pushing for. Teachers should have the option to work from home and students should have the option to learn at home until it is safer to return to a classroom that has been made safe by 6 feet spacing of desks and a guarantee that all surfaces touched and shared by students and staff can be thoroughly cleaned frequently, or there is a vaccine.
Its way too soon to be opening the schools. Health should be the priority. Another semester or 2 of home learning shouldn't hurt students too much in the long run compared to people getting very sick or dying from this virus.

Sincerely,
Robyn Brickland.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 foot desk distance

Brian Hart <bhart289@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher at Kanu o ka Aina Charter, my kids attend Kohala High. Please adhere to the 6 foot distance rule for our classes. I think it's very important for our health. Mahalo for listening.

Brian Hart
Sped teacher
--
Mahalo,
Brian Hart

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Against CDC??

Avniel Naidu <avniel.naidu@campbell.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I want to submit my testimony that 3 ft is unacceptable. In a time where our cases are spiking why are we going against what CDC is saying. Students will not stay 3ft apart. We want to move forward not backward please reconsider this decision.

Thank you for your consideration,
Avniel Naidu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

MRS FIFITA <maisii616@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:23 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Kakou,

My name is Chaslynn (MAI) Fifita. I am the Student Health Aide (SHA) / office assistant at Wai'alae Elementary PCS. As a DOE employer there are so many causes for concerns. For our students, our staff, and the community. As the numbers rise close to the opening time for our schools, it is impossible to maintain a safe social distance. Most definately the education of our students are important, but first and foremost so is our safety. As reopening schools will not provide safe measures no matter how much we try to enforce social distancing and strict sanitation standards. Children will be children, they will tend to gather, hug, touch, sneeze, or wipe their face after touching sanitary items or places. All it takes is 1 person to be infected. We need to take into consideration that not all families are abiding by state laws outside of school as well. We can only hope for they are. With that said, it puts us all at risk. If a staff or student gets sick, they'll be out for 14 days to isolate themselves. Will we have enough coverage to staff absent teachers, office staff, and other positions? As much as I want to go back to work and see my co-workers, the students, and get things picking up again, my safety concerns outweigh all of that. We need to make sure we can fight this spread and come to a completely. Starting school with online learning should be the decision to help keep our keiki, staff, and community safe. I say this as I know our schools just dont have enough space to keep social distancing afloat. If DOE makes the exception for ANYTHING less than 6ft, which is the CDC recommendation, then we are showing the communities that if it's ok at our schools for letting down our guards, then it should be okay for the rest of the state to do so as well. We need to make sure that we comply with ALL saftey measures to keep everyone safe. I hope that we make the right decision and fast. We can make online learning work. We just need to start planning now. As I say that online learning will be best for the start of this school year.

Mahalo,

Chaslynn Fifita
808-824-8743

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet distance

Kumu Kiaha <verne_kiaha@nanakuli.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Verne Kī'aha from Nānākuli Elementary School and I do not agree with the 3 feet distance between teachers and students. Reopening is okay, but stuck to the original guidelines of 6 feet distancing. This is what I testify, NO, to 3 feet and Yes to 6 feet with masks.

--

Kumu V.L. Nālani Kīʻaha
(808) 668-5813 P-8 or (808) 307-8665



Stay Safe & Stay @ Home.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Promise DePeralta <promised@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I do not want to put myself and family at risk due to the decision on your part of being only 3 feet apart from my students. In many other countries where schools reopened and did not take the necessary measures were forced to shut down again. I do not want myself, Keiki, school or community to go down the same path.

Promise De Reis
Waimea Elementary School

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

reopening schools testimony

C Teruya <c_teruya@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:25 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom it May Concern,
I am writing to express my concerns about the opening of the school year. I think it is ridiculous that there is a double standard for the CDC guidelines. Why is the guideline 3 feet for students and 6 feet for the general public for social distancing. Why are masks mandatory when you go into a store but not when you enter a classroom? How can you justify it by calling it a "cohort"? We all have families and exposing each other to the number of children in the classroom.

Yes face to face instruction is important but not at the expense of our lives.

You are asking 5 year olds to social distance and to face forward for the school day to be safe. This is impossible.

You are so eager to get us back into the classroom but taking your time with opening up everything else. It does not make sense. If we take this route, schools will end up closing sooner than later and we will have no option but distant learning.

I am unsure about the motivation for your plan for reopening but it is sad that teachers are once again put on the bottom of the totem pole. This time it is not a money issue but it is our lives, our students lives, and our families that you do not care about. Shame on you.

Cassie Romero

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tanya Pang <tanyapang808@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: "tanyapang808@yahoo.com" <tanyapang808@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:27 PM

Aloha,

My name is Tanya Casil and I am a teacher at Pearl Harbor Elementary. My son attends Ma'ema'e Elementary. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I understand that these are unique and concerning times. I truly believe it is not in our keiki's best interest to be 3 feet apart. It is unsafe for not only our keiki but teachers and staff as well. We need funds to address this and fix this issue. All we need is to have a COVID case occur at school due to the allowance of 3 feet distancing. Please review this again and make the proper adjustments. We need proper equipment, staffing, and information to be given and administered.

I appreciate your time and consideration in reading this email.

Mahalo,

Tanya Casil

Testimony

Angela Kan Hai <cn3angel14@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We want to get back to educating our youth ! We want to be safe while we do this ! Please support us and we care for the most important people !! Our children ! 6ft apart and proper face shield. And masks and thermometer in each class so we can monitor children all day long ! Angela Kan Hai Kahului Elementary special education FSC preschool teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Andrew Rego <alrego@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I attached a file of what a lung looks like after being infected with covid-19. Please do not put students and staff at risk of death because of your own incompetence. There needs to be at least 6 feet between all students to keep them safe.

I cannot believe that you need to be told this.

Andrew



ht_200612_covid-19_double_lung_transplant_northwestern_800x450.jpg
63K

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Saofai Lowe <saofailowe@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:28 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!
My name is Saofai Lowe, a teacher at Waianae High; my children attend will attend Kapolei and Waianae High Schools.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

While I understand the desperate need for our children to return to school, I am not willing to work in nor want to send my children to a learning environment that does not honor the 6-feet distancing outlined by the CDC and in the MOU between HSTA and DOE. I am protective of my health, my family's wellbeing and all of our school and community to demand that a 6-feet distancing setup be followed.

I can't fathom the pain and hurt parents and community members bear should one of their own were to succumbed to this virus because safety measures weren't followed. Prevention is better than cure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Saofai Lowe

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Anthony Martinez <mrmartinezteaches@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As we approach the beginning of the school year, we see rising numbers in positive cases. Please extend the 3ft social distancing in schools to 6ft. Looking forward to a successful year!

Mahalo,
Tony Martinez
Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Brianna Wianecki <briannawianecki@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am testifying on behalf of Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation of Dept of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-21school year.
My name is Brianna Wianecki. I am a teacher from Waihe'e Elementary School.
I do not think that 3 feet is an acceptable or safe distance for students and teachers to abide by and would urge you to reconsider.

Mahalo,

Brianna Wianecki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 foot distance

Marjana Helton <20084736@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha ,
I am 55 and am terribly concerned with the lack of distance and not requiring both students and teachers to wear PPE. I've been at home except to buy food since March 14th. I'm doing all I can to keep myself safe only to be forced into a situation that does not put my health or the health of my students before commerce. So I have a question for you: if I return to school and go no where but school and home (because I'm planning on stocking up big time for Quarter 1 of school) and I get Covid from school is that now workman's comp? This seems to say go back to work but if you get sick ,oh well.
One hundred plus kids going through classrooms with no requirement of PPE or the correct feet of social distancing is NOT the way to do anything but put us all at greater risk.
Please reconsider your protocols that are severely lacking in the safety and continued health and well-being of students/teachers and their families.
Respectfully,
Marjana Helton
Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

su.kikuyama@gmail.com <su.kikuyama@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.
I feel you need to adhere to cc'd guidelines to prevent COVID from coming into our schools. We need to keep it safe for everyone. What evidence do you have that staying 3 feet away is fine? Please consider the safety for everyone- students and teachers. My name Susan Kikuyama and I'm from Waipahu

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michelle Lindsay Lewis <mlindsaylewis@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Three feet apart is not safe! Please dont put my life in danger!
Michelle Lindsay Lewis

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social Distancing Safety Guidelines

Pua Davis <chanteds@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Chante Watson and I am submitting my testimony on behalf of the safety guidelines proposed for students and staff being 3 feet apart and without facemasks. This violates the agreed upon contract and also does not abide by the recommended CDC guidelines. As a teacher I value and LOVE what I do and never at the expense of students. Like a parent these students and faculty members at our schools our family. Our students families, our community becomes family. Many of the students I teach and work with at Nanakuli High and Intermediate schools, families will in larger numbers including kupuna most times and they are subjecting themselves to exposure with the risk of infecting the Kupuna or others with underlying conditions at risk.

Please evaluate and practice what we want our students, their families, and our STATE to abide by!

May God Bless you all.

Chante Watson
Middle School Social Studies Teacher
7th grade
Nānākuli High and Intermediate School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

tasha compos <tcompos@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Tasha Compos, I am a teacher at Kihei Charter School, teaching 7th grade English. I typically would have 24 students in each of my classes. I am concerned about the amount of room in my classroom to separate students. I do not feel that less then 6 feet is safe for my students or for myself.

As much as I want to be in person with all of my students this fall, I feel responsible for their wellbeing when they are under my supervision and I am afraid that close contact will lead to possible spread of virus in our school. I believe that we need to do whatever is needed to keep our families safe.

I also am a parent of an 11th grader at Kihei Middle School, and I am also worried about my sons health. I want to feel secure that he is safe at school and not being exposed.

It is essential that our kids get back to school and they need quality instruction from dedicated, qualified teachers. But it is also our responsibility as educators to provide a safe learning environment. Parents entrust us with their children and we need to take whatever precautions necessary to protect them and give families piece of mind.

This is an incredibly stressful time, with many difficult decisions to be made. We all want life to go back to “normal” but unfortunately that time is not here yet. What are we willing to risk?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tasha Compos
Tcompos@gmail.com
--
Tasha Compos Steamboat Baker Specialty division of MountainBrew

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kiani McBean <kmcbean@aikahies.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. It's imperative that we adhere to the CDC guidelines of 6ft. of social distancing for the safety of our local community here in Hawai'i. I am a first grade teacher at 'Aikahi Elementary and I have been teaching for 9 years. I want to keep my students, coworkers, and my family safe during this pandemic by respecting the guidelines from our health officials.

Thank you,
Kiani Mcbean

This email is the property of the Hawaii Department of Education

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3' distance is not enough

Sandy Patterson <redkingdogmom@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a very concerned teacher who wishes we could go back to "normal", however, I have a family member who is battling cancer and I'm very concerned for the safety of my family as well as the students and their families and loved ones. I live on the island of Lana'i, and so getting to the hospital in a timely fashion is a concern. I know there really is no easy way to start school, but the community needs to know that their school is practicing the safest guidelines given by the CDC.
Thank you for your concern,
Sandy Patterson
Lanai High and Elementary School

testimony for July 9 meeting re opening of schools

Bane Bowman <banebowman@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:35 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

The Hawaii Department of Education has recently made a horrendous decision. That along with other choices made by our politicians will lead to massive amounts of illness and death on our islands.

Covid-19 is not anywhere near fully understood. New discoveries about this killer come out daily. One recent fact is that the virus has mutated to a much more infectious state. We are also getting daily reports of serious and sometimes everlasting complications caused by the disease. Seemingly well controlled states, like California, become massive breeding grounds for this disease within days. California has now recorded a quarter of a million cases and over 6000 deaths, and that's where most of our tourists come from! Texas hospitals are today described as just like New York at the height of the infection there. In New York 54' refrigerated, commercial trailers were used by the dozens as temporary morgues because all other morgues were full. Children and people of all ages are dying from this new disease on a daily basis. The average age of infected people is now 33. We all saw in today's news that 41 year old Nick Cordero a famous Broadway actor had died after 90 days in the hospital. But not before his leg had to be amputated and his lungs were so badly damaged that he needed a double transplant. As I write this the U.S. Has set a new record of 50,000 new cases in a single day. Today the US death toll stand at 132,000. States which have "opened" are rapidly backtracking and are closing again!

Knowing all of this the DOE has decided to re-open schools. Yes I know they are going to attempt to reduce class size, implement social distancing and require masks for everybody. Now anybody who has ever been around kids especially kids in groups know that those attempts are going to be laughable. Do you honestly think that we can depend on kids to keep everybody safe? Oh sure they're going to keep their masks on and stay 6 feet apart ALL DAY at school! So let's look a scary scenario. Johnny kisses his girlfriend, who is infected but symptom free, at school. So now Johnny is infected but won't have any symptoms for two weeks. Johnny goes home to his parents and grandparents. His girlfriend in the meantime is spreading the disease to her ohana. I don't have to tell you the rest of the story. But realize that these two kids can raise havoc in their community. It is now commonly understood that people of color, those who live in high density areas and the poor are at greater risk of catching this disease. Sound familiar?

Then let's look at school staffs. Throughout the state we literally have hundreds of school employees who are highly at risk. Don't forget that almost any serious underlying disease or simply older age puts those employees in mortal danger.

Which brings up the question of liability, if keiki start getting sick or an elderly teacher dies, who is legally and financially to blame?

Bane Bowman
Wailuku

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year

FERDENAN DAMO <ferdenan@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I strongly disagree with the DOE's position to allow 3 feet classroom social distancing. This is extremely dangerous and deadly! To do this would be the height of irresponsibility. There should only be 10 people in the classroom, distanced 6 feet apart with masks/PPE worn. Why is it local businesses, restaurants, medical institutions, UH-Manoa/higher education strictly following CDC requirement, but the DOE does not? Insane.

I have a pre-existing medical condition making me vulnerable to Covid-19's dangerous and deadly effects.

Shame on DOE to even consider teachers and students to be put in dangerous situations.

Ferdenan Damo

Social Studies Teacher

Ilima intermediate School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kathy Louie <kathylouie@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
In order to protect our students, staff, and teachers when returning to school, we must require 6 feet social distancing in classroom and other school settings as recommended by the CDC. The safety and health of our students and staff must be a priority.

Sincerely,
Kathy Louie
Pearl Harbor Elementary School Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re-opening of school

Denette Kapule <netts_kapule@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:44 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm in a pre-K special ed class room and the students that I work with are always sick with the cold, and they aren't able to get sent home without a fever, which worries me.
I really don't know how I'm going to teach the children when most of the students are in this class for social interaction, and most of our activities/teachings are hands on. No matter what the DOE says I really can't see us following guidelines .
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Cherylin Paiva <pcherylin@ymail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:44 PM
Reply-To: "pcherylin@ymail.com" <pcherylin@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I dont think the kids willbe safe going back to school. I have 2 @Waianae High School, 1@ Waianae Intermediate and 1 @ Makaha Elementary. I also work at the Elementary.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools' plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a second grade teacher at Kanoelani Elementary School and have a compromised immune system. I strongly believe that there must be more stringent safeguards in place at Hawaii's public schools *before* the teachers, staff, and students return in August. It is utterly irresponsible to have Superintendent Kishimoto state that a three feet distance between students is sufficient in the classroom. When a person coughs or sneezes, the respiratory droplets propel far beyond the three feet distance. At the very least, there needs to be a mandated six feet distance separating the students in the classroom. In addition, it must be mandatory for all of the teachers, staff, and students to wear a mask or face shield in the classroom because there may be individuals who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. As a teacher, I do not consider myself expendable and am disgusted that there will not be daily temperature checks for the students and employees. According to Superintendent Kishimoto, we will be responsible for visually gauging whether or not the students are well. Should we do the same for the visitors arriving at the Honolulu airport? We need to use our common sense. Since we cannot predict the severity of COVID-19 in infected adults and children, we must not let out guard down. The current plan that Superintendent Kishimoto proposed is unsound and jeopardizes my health as well as the safety of Hawaii's public school teachers, staff, and students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony,
Erin Saiki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Katherine (Katie) Jagger <katie.m.jagger@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Katie Jagger, and I am both a mother and SPED teacher at Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School. Please reconsider your suggestions regarding the health and safety Of our kids and staff. I am asking that you require 6 feet distance between students and face masks when feasible, in accordance with the CDC.

I am eager to be back in the classroom with my students and for my son to see his friends, but if we aren't not cautious all of our efforts will fail. Please follow the CDC guidance and your MOU with the HSTA.

Respectfully,

Katie Jagger

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

School Reopening

Yvette <sassysc95@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:49 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion item VI(A):
Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.
My name is Yvette De Ponte, and I am an Educational Assistant at E.B. deSilva Elementary School.

As an educator, I am very concerned about the safety of students and staff members. Many of us have compromised immune systems. If I may speak for myself, I have several health concerns, putting me in the "high risk" category for Covid. I also care for my mother who has Alzheimer's and fiance who has undergone Coronary Artery Bypass surgery in the past. I am extremely worried about what this could mean for all of us.

Having elementary students adhere to CDC guidelines will be very difficult. At this age, many of our younger students are very oral. We continue to teach them to cover their coughs, wipe their nose, and wash their hands. Also, they are social beings and constantly gravitate towards one another. Keeping them apart will be daunting task.

Models suggest, half a class of students attend per day. We are looking at a total of 15+ people in a small classroom. Social distancing will not work.
Please, reconsider your plans and protect us from the deadly novel Covid-19 virus.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Keola Ka'uhane <keola24@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am 100% against the proposed 3 foot social distancing and not wearing a mask. If students and teachers report back to school in this manner it will definitely lead to a spike in the number of covid 19 cases which will then result in a total school closure. I believe the 6 foot social distancing and any other CDC guidelines should be followed completely without any variance. If schools open without following the recommended CDC guidelines I will not be sending my daughter to Stevenson Middle School when school starts in August.

Mahalo, Keola Ka'uhane, Hawaiian Education teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Claudette Humphrey <chumphrey1@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation in Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am against the plan for students sitting 3 feet apart and not wearing a mask. I am a senior teacher fear for myself as well as my students safety and health. Even here in Hawaii youngsters have become infectious with the virus. Please don't go forward with this plan. Mahalo. Claudette Humphrey-Waianae Intermediate School

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

robin wong <robinwongkauai@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board,

I am a freshman English teacher at Kauai High School and I am VERY concerned about the contradiction to the HSTA agreement on social distancing with students. As someone who lives with an immuno-compromised partner, I must be assured that I will not be unduly exposed to COVID 19 at my workplace. I absolutely DO NOT feel comfortable disregarding CDC Guidelines and returning to school with unknown and unmasked students only 3 feet from my face.

My health and safety is dictated and determined by the collective wisdom of the notable scientists and disease prevention experts who make up the distinguished Centers for Disease Control, not Hawaii's departments of Heath and Education. Dr. Bruce Anderson/Hawaii Department of Heath confessed, "There is no clear formula on this…we are learning as we go." If we cut corners on safety now, we will run the risk of further infection and more catastrophic results. This is a global pandemic that has killed hundreds of thousands people; shouldn't we be *conservative* in our approach to re-opening schools?

I hope you will make the right decision; one that protects students and their families, as well as teacher and their families.

Mahalo,

Robin Wong

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jan Avellana <javellana@hes.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Janice Avellana and I am a first grade teacher at Hahaione Elementary School in Hawaii Kai. I am writing to ask that you honor the contractual agreement to configure classrooms with a minimum of six feet between desks. Even with proper social distancing, the risk of contracting COVID-19 still exists. As a mother of two public school students at Niu Valley Middle School And Kaiser High School, and with a husband who is also a public school teacher at Roosevelt High School, I am asking for a safer working environment for my entire family, not a ‘no risk’ work and learning environment, but a safer one.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Janice Avellana
Grade 1 Teacher,
Hahaione Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: 6 feet spacing between student seating

Grace Chen-Ellis <gracechenellis@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Grace Chen-Ellis <gracechenellis@gmail.com>

Aloha Hawaii DOE,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I write to object to the Board's failure to require six feet spacing between student seating in Hawaii classrooms. All of the science indicates that a minimum distance of six feet is necessary to effectively prevent spread of the virus.

This is also the minimum states all across the country -- including our own -- have required or requested the public observe in public spaces. Six feet is also part of the agreement reached with HSTA.

Please reconsider your mandate and adopt rules that follow the scientifically proven guidelines to insure the safety of students and teachers alike.

Mahalo for your consideration.
Grace Chen-Ellis, PhD
Molokai High School

I am a teacher, and have respiratory problem, and Asthma

Flora Green <flora.green@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I love my teaching job, and I would do anything to teach our students of today. However, I am not willing to jeopardize my life by risking my health, due to unsafe school openings. I do not want to work in close range to anyone! Six feet has been talked about all around the world to stay safe, so why should we take it upon ourselves to change it to 3 feet?. Let's not rush the opening of the school year with silly mistakes! Rather let's be wise and make sure that the reopening up of the Hawaii school is safe!

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kate Maloney <kateannmaloney@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not put my life in danger. Please follow the guidelines. Is putting more students in the classroom worth more infections and possible death. It may seem like an exaggeration but it is reality. Six feet is the guidelines, we should not be making suggestions. This could be life or death it should not an experiment. I am disappointed with the BOE. Support our students and teachers. Keep us safe!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony ..Concern ....

melia85@aol.com <melia85@aol.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:56 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Regarding re-opening of schools:

1) WHO will be sanitizing classrooms ? chairs , desk , computers etc..

2) Will employer provide PPE to all staff ?

Sincerely,
Staci / Educational Assistant / KKP complex ,Keaau, Hawaii

Testimony

Kelly Shimabukuro <kellyshima@me.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 6:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have many concerns about students and tourists returning at basically the same time!
My first concern is the fact that many tourists will choose the 14 day quarantine option knowing full well that no one is enforcing it! It's a huge problem on Maui and it's only going to get worse. Our numbers are surely going to rise.
My 2nd concern is that many of our parents work in the service industry. Their children could very easily be exposed and have no symptoms while exposing others, especially if the students are only 3-4 feet apart in buildings with a shared A/C system. Students cannot be expected to face forward all day. It's not possible!
My third concern pertains to leave when, not if, we have to quarantine because one of our students is exposed. Will that come out of my sick leave or how will that work?
Will we get worker's compensation if we become infected, being that our condition is work related?
Will our families be able to sue for compensating If we lose our lives due to being exposed in the workplace?
Will there be psychologist on hand to help us deal with seeing our students, our coworkers, and our loved ones get seriously ill from this Illness? Will their be counselors available when people we know and love die?
These are my concerns!
I want to go back to work. I want students to return to campuses! I want to know that our lives are not going to be put at risk, and that we can do this safely! Please reconsider the 3-4 ft rule, and require masks! Also, please provide the students and the staff the safeguards the CDC recommends so we can be successful.
Thank you!

Kelly Shimabukuro

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Angela Cain <cain.angela.r@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education:

This letter is to submit testimony for Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

In order to protect students, teachers, staff and families, public schools must implement the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation of "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19. Students who are not spaced apart are characterized as being at the highest risk of contracting this virus. The 6 foot recommendation is the guideline that all public places are currently following, and it should be the same for public schools.

The memorandum of understanding signed by both Hawaii State Teachers Association and the State of Hawaii, states the following "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible." There was no language in the memorandum of understanding to indicate that 3 feet was acceptable as long as students were facing forward. As both an educator and parent, it is hard to imagine students continuously facing forward without turning to talk to their neighbors. It is irresponsible for the superintendent to suggest 3 feet is acceptable when it clearly goes against current CDC recommendations and was not agreed upon in the memorandum of understanding. Additionally, it shows little concern for the health of public school employees, students and their families.

If schools are to reopen, they need to reopen as safely as possible. This means putting health and safety first and following all CDC guidelines as written.

Respectfully,

Angela Cain

Special Education, Wilcox Elementary, Kauai Complex

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

kim balles <kolohe32@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I am a teacher at Moanalua Elementary School and my son is going to be attending the same school as a kindergartner. The 3 feet rule is not acceptable and puts myself in jeopardy. As a single mother, if something happens to me, I have no one to help me with my son. I am considered immunocompromised and it would not be in my best interest for the 3 feet without masks to be implemented. The 6 feet and required masks rules need to be in place for the safety of all parties.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Leticia Strboya <leti314@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:03 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

As parents and responsible community members of Waikoloa Village and the larger Hawai'i Island we are very uncomfortable, and fear our third grade child returning to school face to face within the next month.
We don't feel that the school is capable of providing a safe environment for learning under these circumstances for the student and staff alike.
Our situation is so dynamic that we will not know what Covid cases will look like in August with return of travel without quarantine.
We feel strongly that young children will have a hard time keeping the masks on as school returns in the August heat, especially outdoors. The fact that mask wearing isn't made mandatory Is also red flag. We have to have clear guidelines or this will not work for the students and staff.
How will the 6ft distancing be enforced? Our son is a 8 year old on the spectrum and often doesn't know how to normally distance, let alone socially distance.
Three feet of social distancing in classrooms is nonsensical. It doesn't work according to CDC guidelines.
We are learning now that just breathing is enough to spread it in the air.
The in classroom environment is set up for failure due to the lack of distancing and doubly with the lack of mandatory mask wearing where it counts the most, in the classroom.
It doesn't matter how small classrooms will be. These small classrooms will infect the entire class as well as teacher and aide/s.
Why should we put any of our students and teachers at risk of a potential life threatening disease just so it can spread within our ohanas and communities?
We should not be treated as though we are expendable. That is not aloha!

Is there enough staff and aide given to educators?
Discerning illness by sight is not enough and we know about the asymptotic ones.
Sanitizing high touch areas only once per day should be done as normal practice pre-covid
procedure.

We are concerned that the risks outweigh the benefits of face to face learning. No one want to live with the fact they unknowingly infected someone causing irreparable damage to them or someone(s) in their ohana.

We feel airing on the side of caution is the best thing for our aina as a whole. And keeping school going virtually is the best way to do that.
Sadly if our son's health is not seen as the priority that it is, we have no other alternative but to home school him. We are not equipped to do this but at least we have honesty to admit this. Alas we will do the very best we can to preserve precious lives.

Aloha,
Leticia & Daniel Strboya
Parents of Isaiah Strboya 3rd grade student at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nadine Abelardo <nadine.abelardo@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm testifying on the discussion item VI (A) Presentation on department of educationsComprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020 -2021 school year.
I am deeply concerned with our schools opening this school year where our students will be spaced 3 ft apart instead of the 6ft for health and safety reasons. Our school is planning on opening our classrooms where students will be able to takeoff their masks in class. We need to have that 6 feet distancing to keep everyone safe.
Nadine Abelardo
Kīhei Elementary School
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Megan Matsuzaki <megandarae@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Megan Matsuzaki and I am a teacher at Kaneohe Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am extremely concerned about the DOE's suggestion that student desks can be spaced only 3' apart. While I have missed being in the classroom with students and believe our best teaching will take place in a physical environment, it must be done with the utmost consideration for the safety of our students and staff, not to mention all of our families. In addition, the CDC recommends, "Put distance between your children and other people outside of your home. Keep children at least 6 feet from other people." (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/protect-children.html)

Like many of our students and fellow staff members, I live in a multi-generational household. At least one of us has risk factors that make a Covid-19 infection extremely dangerous and potentially deadly. In addition, my household includes two teachers at two different public schools and children at two other public schools. If any of us becomes infected, the potential ripple effect of infections throughout our household and individual schools is frightening and dangerous. Please keep in mind we are JUST ONE family.

Please do not compromise safety measures to fit more students into (often already cramped) classrooms. The `ohana that make up our school community are too precious.

Sincerely,

Megan Matsuzaki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kelly Wadlegger <wadleggerk@knights.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Doe
Regarding opening schools:
Please have 6 feet social distancing(Not 3)
We need to keep all staff and students safe especially with the current outbreak and hotspots on Mainland.
I work for Iao Intermediate on Maui
And I currently teach summer school in Kailua for grade 1-8 and we socially distance, have 10 max and wear masks
Inside. We need to set standards for safety so we don't have to shut down schools.
Sincerely
Kelly Wadlegger, BFA, MFA
Theatre arts Educator
Grade 6-12

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

AUTUMN CRANWELL <autumnbombs@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

Aloha, I am sending this email for testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. My name is Autumn Cranwell. I am a first grade teacher at Kahakai elementary on Hawaii Island. My son attends this school and my daughter goes to Konawaena Middle School. So I am writing from both a teacher and parent stance. I am NOT ok with a 3 foot social distance in classrooms. It goes against our HSTA contract and it is not ok in these unprecedented times. Stores and public places clearly state 6 feet distance, why would schools be any difference! I should not have to choose between my health and work nor should I have to choose between health and school for my children. We are already compromising returning to school. I am scared for myself and my children. There are too many what ifs that go against our safety, do not add another stressor of physical distancing. Do not make us compromise our health and risk shutdown of our schools. Yes I want to go back to normal but we are clearly not there.

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Natalie Dotseth <nataliedotseth@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hawaii State Board of Education,

As an educator, in Oahu, I would like to testify on the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Natalie Dotseth; I am a middle school teacher at Voyager Public Charter School, which is a K-8 school.

The following statement in the health and safety guidance document that was released by the HIDOE puts students, staff, and families at risk: " Maintain a distance of at least three feet between seats, including group tables, if students are facing the same direction." This statement,not only contradicts the HSTA agreement with the state, but it also contradicts the current recommendations by the CDC.

Our goals as a community, is to support each other through this pandemic; the primary goal must be to ensure the health and safety of our most vulnerable community members. By not following the CDC guidelines, and the agreed upon terms with HSTA, we are not putting the health and safety of our keiki, staff, and families at the forefront of the decision making. Trying to create a more normal inclusive environment in our classrooms during these difficult times, requires for there to be at least the physical space needed for students and teachers to safely interact. The more students that we are placing in an area with teachers and staff, the greater the opportunity to spread COVID 19, especially with the start of the school year coinciding with the return of more visitors into our state.

Hawai'i has been relatively successful at the start of the spread of COVID 19 in our community; this has been due to the fact that we started with tighter safety measures. As we have seen as we begin to loosen these safety measures, more COVID 19 cases are starting to occur, including the exposure of the virus during the Summer Fun Program in Waipahu.

As a state, it is necessary to begin our school year with stringent safety measures to minimize potential harm to our keiki, staff, and families. Please consider maintaining the 6 ft physical distancing as part of the reopening plan.

Natalie Dotseth

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Trent Nakashima <trentnakashima@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am appalled by the "new" distancing plan. Donu people even think about this or just flying by? Have u spoken to any credible doctor or scientist or are u being influenced by parents who need a babysitter and states with all eyes on the first state to begin school? Bad enough u are influencing us to our hospitalization and maybe deaths, besides early retirees, now u have the audacity to ask us how we would like to catch this disease. The least u could give us is the six feet, everything else well cover as we always do; u know the caring for kids and each other part. Shame on all of you! By the way, u haven't given us our continued pay, we have earned it! Now as little as we make, u might take a pay cut as well?!? I hope the powers that be will have the guts to call the bullshit for what it is and do what is necessary for us to keep what we rightfully earned. We also have a raise that we earned. Thanks, buy I know you won't read this and with your ideas neither will our kids.

Trent Nakashima
Baldwin High School
9th and 12th grade English

Testimony

Jody Africa Aguilar <africajody@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.
My name is Jody K. Africa Aguilar
I am a Special Education teacher at Maui High School
My granddaughter attends Pomaikai Elementary, due to enter 2nd grade.
For myself as a teacher in a resource classroom setting and some periods in an inclusion setting, having students allowed to sit just three feet apart is unacceptable. This is the same for my granddaughter in an elementary school setting. Having students only sitting 3 feet feet apart leads them and teachers to be at risk for contacting the Covid 19 virus. All students and teachers should be required to wear a mask in the classroom for the safety of ALL. Science and statistics show how quickly the virus can be passed from one person to another. Allowing students sitting just 3 feet apart is not sufficient. I don't feel safe in my classroom teaching my students with these unrealistic limitations, and I do feel that I would be more at risk of catching the virus without adequate spacing (as in grocery stores) . Thank you .

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Deanne Pong <deannekp@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,
I am testifying on Discussion ItemVI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Kehau Pong and I am a teacher a first grade teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I am also a grandparent with grandchildren that attend Holomua Elementary and Ewa Elementary Schools. I am very concerned that our classrooms will not be a safe place for our keiki unless we mandate that all classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.

It is unacceptable to think that our students desks be configured with only three feet apart. For the health and safety of all teachers, school staff, students and families please make the right decision to adhere to CDC guidelines and open our schools with six feet distancing of desks.

Mahalo,
Deanne Pong

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

ashleyweakland@hotmail.com <ashleyweakland@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, my name is Ashley Thoma. I am a teacher at Konawaena High, and a parent to 3 students at Konawaena elementary.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am against the 3 feet distancing and support 6 feet distance between desks. For one, I want to do what CDC recommends for social distancing. And for two, it is imparative I do my part to remain healthy and do what I can to keep my students, and children healthy.

Mahalo, Ashley Thoma

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

mark_alfred_kawika_fontaine@yahoo.com <mark_alfred_kawika_fontaine@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:13 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Mark Alfred Kawika Fontaine. I am a teacher at Kua O Ka La Public Charter School. I wish to submit the below testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I think that a six-foot space needs to be maintained between all students and staff. I disagree that a student separated by a three foot radius of space is enough. Further, this practice seems not to be in adherence with the agreement made between the HSTA and the Department.

Additionally, I am very concerned that masks are not required. It is common knowledge that COVID-19 is carried in the air. However, any search will find the recent and unprecedented news of the hundreds of scientists around the world who have signed a letter to the WHO stating that there is ample evidence to conclude that much smaller particles of COVID-19 infected substances remain in the air for much longer than was initially believed. This development should be enough for decision makers to be more, and not less, cautious about social distancing and other safety practices as our schools move towards reopening.

Thank you for the opportunity to put this on the record.

Mark Alfred Kawika Fontaine

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony school opening 2020-21

jfunamura@hawaii.rr.com <jfunamura@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please discount 3 feet of distancing as Dr. Kishimoto announced as acceptable. Please do better for our keiki. The virus is new and MEDICAL experts are discovering more findings about it that to make such an amateur, definitive stipulation seems irresponsible. If we err, it should be on the side of over adjusting rather than under.

Regards,
Joni Funamura-sasil

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

No to 3 Ft. Apart

Robbi-Lynn Contrades <kamanumeleokalani@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whomever has the ability to affect change with integrity, please consider that teachers, like myself, of quality, integrity, as indicated by years of consistent tripod scores, were already, before these more current hardships: lock downs, pandemics, civil unrests, working for love, under years of unacceptable conditions that led many of us to leave our chosen careers for the sake of our mental and physical health. Many of us have suffered from burn out due to the ever unwavering need for data and test driven curriculum, which nearly killed the morale of both teachers and learners whose emotional needs could never be met due to the mechanics of trying to fit into quantitative versus qualitative world of education. Now we are being asked to return to unpredictable conditions that further decrease the morale and faith of the teachers, whose very confidence is foundational in building up the learning community that we serve. Our health and wellness determine the health and wellness of our clientele. 3 ft apart for social distancing in close quarters is the extreme contradiction to "distant learning": it is outrageous and offensive. I have forgotten the pride I used to feel as one who earned her profession in education via much adversity. I have wondered about that honor with which teachers of some remote past were revered, even as much as doctors and lawyers, though never paid as those professionals. Still, we chose to continue to lead future doctors, judges, presidents the steady evolution substandard and inadequate conditions for LOVE. Time to reciprocate: honor our health and wellness, protect highly qualified positions: you will reap whatever you sow, so sow seed that takes soil and bares fruit.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Larry McCarty <macclanahan@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I work at Iao Intermediate School on Maui in Wailuku.

I find it totally irresponsible that the State of Hawaii is proposing 3ft of social distancing in classrooms and not requiring students to wear masks at the same time.

You are risking the lives of the students and staff at all schools.

I will not be entering a classroom full of students with 3 ft of separation and no masks.

Plus you are discussing pay cuts, which in reality is asking us to do more for less.

I do not agree with any of this.
Respectfully
Larry McCarty

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Elise Anderson <eliseanderson13@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing this email to ask the board of education to please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.
I am a first grade teacher at Wahiawa Elementary where prior to this virus, we had plenty of sickness and infections, etc. passing around very easily. Please put our keiki and staff and their health as the first priority!
Mahalo,
Elise Anderson

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

hari messer <harimarc@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Hari Messer. I teach Math at Waimea High School on Kauai and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020–2021 School Year.

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) has released health and safety guidance that says spacing student seats three feet apart without masks is acceptable. This directly contradicts our agreement with the state as well as recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The agreed language states that: “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.”

HSTA believes attempts to initially configure student seats for the reopening of the school year at less than six feet apart is in violation of the agreement. The switch is disingenuous and does not follow the BOE’s resolution of “working with togetherness” to ensure that “the health and safety of students and staff is the most important concern of the public education system.”

This is especially concerning because I (along with 30-40% of HSTA members) am in a high risk category.

I understand that everyone wants life to return to normal. But these are not normal times, and the CDC indicates that placing students and teachers less than six feet apart, especially without face coverings, creates a high risk for the spread of COVID-19. In South Korea, Israel, and Beijing, schools had to be shut down after they reopened. Closing schools or forcing teachers to choose jobs over their health will not help our teachers or our keiki.

Social and physical distancing avoids the very real possibility of having to close all schools.

Please require the Hawaii State Department of Education to adhere to our original agreement.

Thank you,

Hari Messer

Math teacher

Waimea High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

Cupid Shinyama <shinyama@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:24 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a SPED EA...my main concern is how do we keep our kiddos from social distancing from their peers...our campus is small and classrooms are small...our kiddos want to be playing and learning what their regular peers are doing and we have our regular ed kiddos who want to help and be with SPED friends...SOCIAL DISTANCING will be a problem...PLAYGROUND activities during recess must also be addressed...lunch time...our SPED kiddos also focus on those times!!!

Sent from Outlook

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tre <teresamcaveney@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I write to you all today with fear in my heart; fear for my own health, my family's health, and that of my students and their families' during this deadly pandemic. To not follow CDC recommendations and guidelines for social distancing and put proper 6 feet distancing language in our schools reopening guidelines is both negligent and dangerous.

Aside from the fact that I truly believe schools should remain closed with distant learning only until a successful therapeutic or vaccine is readily available, I am concerned that the BOE is sending teachers, staff, and students into a possibly threatening situation to spread and infect our school communities and state.

Please take the recommendations brought forth by HSTA and it's members and add the recommendations to Hawaii's schools reopening plan. I'm a 16 year veteran teacher, with asthma and underlying health issues. I've sacrificed so much by continuing to teach here in my home state- terrible pay, pay disparity for years, subpar health and retirement benefits, lack of school funding...now, risking my health and life during this pandemic. The least BOE can do is support the HSTA recommendations for safety and proper distancing enforcement while on school campus.

Mahalo for your consideration.
Sincerely,
Teresa Mcaveney

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Patricia Gorski <gorskified@me.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, my name is Patty Gorski, and I'm a mother of a kindergarten student entering Makawao elementary and I'm also a teacher of special education at king Kekaulike on Maui.

I'm writing in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

It has come to my attention that the HIDOE has gone against all recommendations of 6' space between students and is now saying that children and teachers are expected to stay safe from the transmission of covid 19 with only 3' space between and masks optional? While I appreciate the efforts made in the past to keep our children safe from the pandemic, this suggestion is unacceptable.

I am outraged that this is even a consideration on the table- all laws say 6' between parties and that masks must be worn in public indoor spaces, but for some reason that I cannot comprehend, my child and the lives of the students I teach are expendable. My life and my colleagues' lives are expendable. The lives of the keiki, their families and kupuna are expendable. In what world is this acceptable? There must be other options to consider rather than cramming our children into poorly ventilated, improperly sanitized classrooms in what will be the peak of the pandemic in our state, just as we begin to allow tourists back in. I'm quite honestly terrified.

I'm upset as a mom not knowing what the classrooms will be like for my son. I'm upset I do not yet know what his schedule or my own schedule as a teacher will look like and there's less than a month left before I'm expected to return. How do I plan for childcare when there's literally no plan for our kids to go back to school? We had months to plan, and now with 4 weeks left we are told 3' of space and maybe wear masks is acceptable. This jeopardizes the lives of more than just our kids, but all islanders as well as our fragile, tourism dependent economy. I will not be surprised to see many parents pull their kids from public school setting because of how poorly planned the reopening is. At this point, I'm among them as I wonder if it's safe to send my own son to school with these lax health precautions.

I do hope the HIDOE reconsiders their plan for reopening and errs on the side of caution. Please. I don't want to lose my son's life nor any one of my students' lives to something preventable, and I certainly do not want to leave my son an orphan should any one of us contract this illness.

Thank you for your time
Patty Gorski

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Alex Nelson <arexnelson91@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education-
I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Alex Nelson and I am an employee at Kauai High School.
I urge the BOE to honor the contract agreement of 6 feet apart for students this school year. I was shocked to hear Dr. Kishimoto say "3 feet" after reading the MOU and CDC guidelines which clearly states 6 feet. This is especially important as the state reopens and students may be spending some days at home. We must follow even stricter social distancing guidelines during those instructional models as students may have a much wider contact network than they previously have had during this pandemic. We must do everything we can do protect our students, their families, as well as the staff and their families.
As a teacher, 6 feet between students means very little collaborative group/partner work, a huge change to activities, and a loss of vital interactions between me and my students. That will be difficult for me, but what would be more difficult and traumatic would be one of my students/families/myself getting sick because we are not willing to follow the 6 foot social distancing guidelines that have been the norm during COVID-19.
I hope that the BOE decides to honor the contract MOU between the DOE and HSTA and enforce 6 feet. I know it will take a lot of creativity and problem solving, but hey! Those are skills that each educator strives to help our students develop each day. Mahalo for your time and dedication.

Best,
Alex Nelson
Kauai High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jeanine Coombs-Todd <jeaninerct@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,
VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–21.
3 feet is unacceptable to the Health and Safety of our Teachers and school site staff. Please revise to the recommended 6 feet of CDC.
Jeanine Coombs- Todd
Maui HTSA member

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet is NOT ok

Jo Ann Iwane <malobrka@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a retired teacher, former HSTA Board member, and now president of the HSTA-R West Hawaii Community Club.
I find the 3-feet socially distancing completely unacceptable for both students and teachers. Recent research has shown that the virus can spread beyond even the 6 feet CDC recommended distance. The lives of children and teachers will be in serious jeopardy. Please overturn this DOE directive immediately.

Jo Ann Iwane

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

lvanalstine@kkhs.k12.hi.us <lvanalstine@kkhs.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,
Please respect the agreed upon guidelines for returning to school. I am so excited to see my students and even though I want more time with them, I am also concerned about the spread of disease. We will already be more vulnerable as the stare reopens to visitors without quarantine. I am concerned about the safety of my more medically vulnerable students and my coworkers who are at risk because of health conditions. I am personally worried about being exposed because I am the sole caretaker for my elderly parents.
Thank you for your consideration,
Leaf Van Alstine

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jayli Vierra <jvierra07@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I feel that spacing student seats three feet apart without masks is unacceptable. The CDC says that putting students and teachers less than six feet apart, especially without face coverings, creates a high risk for spreading COVID-19. Placing desks three feet apart is unsafe for students and teachers. Students and teachers must be safe in the classroom. The health and safety of the teachers and students should be a priority. It does not make sense that we have to stay 6 feet away from others in public (grocery stores, malls, etc.) but not in schools.

As a teacher with a suppressed immune system, I am worried and anxious about returning to the classroom without the recommended 6 feet social distance and masks for everyone on campus. Please reconsider changing the spacing of desks to 6 feet instead of 3 feet for the health and safety of the students, teachers and staff members.

Mahalo,
Jayli Vierra
Teacher at Kapunahala Elementary School

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

TK Mur <traciemuraki@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Tracie muraki and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.
I work at Waialua High & Intermediate School and have a 7th grade child at Kamalani Academy.

I do not feel comfortable with the 3 feet rule and no masks. Why would you put our lives, the DOE teachers, in danger and in jeopardy to risk getting Covid-19. That is bad. I have parents over 70 years old and my child lives with her dad and grandmother part time. Her grandma is 74 years old. She is a kupuna and needs to remain isolated from people and the virus.

Please do not open the schools. I would prefer distance learning 100% of the time. Pleas allow us to teach from home.

Mahalo,
Tracie

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

No to 3ft social distancing

minoakamanawaapau <minoakamanawaapau@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To:BOE
If you care about the well being of both teachers and students, then you will keep to the 6ft social distancing.. As much as I would love to do group work, go on field trips, pair up with another class; I will not being doing that this year because I know how important that students keep to themselves this year.. Put yourself in the teacher's shoes, how would you feel?! Put yourself in a public school parent's shoes, how would you feel if your child brought it home.. Put your shoes in those who have medical needs, how would you react.. So, think, think about us teachers, Our families, our keiki.. If your heart isn't pono about it, then Don't allow it and stick to 6ft.. If you're heartless, then continue to do as you please without taking into considerstion about our voice..
Hewa!
Mahalo!
A public school teacher

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Merna Jim <mernajim1@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for re-opening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a recently retired special education teacher at Kapaa Elementary School. I am sharing my concern about the need for the Hawaii Department of Education's need to follow the CDC guidelines in the school setting. I have taught and/or worked with the special needs population for over thirty years. My students had various disabilities and some were chronically afflicted with varying degrees of runny noses, sneezing, poor hygiene with varying degrees of behavioral problems. Seating students with special needs in a classroom without the 6 foot distancing will put other students, teachers and support staff at risk for the spread of COVID-19 at this time. I am also concerned about my dear friends who are teachers, educational assistants, educational support staff members and administrators. Everyone needs to be in the safest environment as possible.

I am also the grandmother of three children, two at Kapolei Elementary school and one at Ewa Makai School. I am advocating for my grandchildren's health and safety. I am the mother of a speech/language pathologist at Kapolei Elementary school. I am advocating for my daughter's health and safety. Please have the Hawaii Department of Education comply with CDC guidelines to ensure the health and safety of my ohana.

Aloha,
Merna M. Jim,
Retired Special Education Teacher

Testimony

Kristie Masatsugu <noahsark40@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:44 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a teacher at Iliahi Elementary School. I have been teaching for over twenty years. There have been many challenges and expectations that come along with teaching. I knew what some of these challenges and expectations would be since my mother was a teacher. For the most part, I have enjoyed being a teacher and have realized that it comes with many sacrifices. I have been willing to make those sacrifices for the sake of my students. However, with this current unprecedented pandemic everything has changed. I need to think about my elderly parents who help take care of my school aged daughter. I need to think about the health of my students and their families. Many of my students live in multigenerational homes.

I feel that the six feet of distance in between desks will help to keep the Coronavirus out of our schools. Our state is still vulnerable to the virus as shown by our recent numbers. As more things open up and we open up to tourists, it will only be inevitable for more cases to occur. The six-feet distance will at least provide some space for students and teachers to feel safe enough to teach and interact with each other. I feel that with three feet of distance it will difficult to teach. I will be concentrating on wether or not they are staying away from each other, facing forward, not touching things that do not belong to them instead of teaching them. At least 6 feet of distance gives each child more room and I won't feel I have to watch them like a hawk in such a small personal space. Children are social and are going to want to talk to their classmates. We have instilled collaborative and cooperative learning. Now that will change as well. At least the six feet apart will help them be safe and still be able to have some interaction between them.

I know that having all students in school is the most important thing and not just for academic purposes. However, times have changed. I now cannot enter a store without a mask, I have to wait 6 feet apart from the person in front of me when paying. Shouldn't we also consider having six feet of distance for our students? Yes, thankfully the virus has not affected our children, but these children live with adults who are vulnerable. We must do our part in order to help with this pandemic. Yes, I already know it will be a hard year. Yes, I know I will have to condense a lot of learning into a limited amount of time. Yes, I know that having all students in school is important. Yes, I know that recess will not look the same. Yes, I know that I'll be ask to hold meetings with parents in different ways. As a teacher, I am used to being flexible. However, I am having a hard time being flexible about the health and safety of my students, their families, my family, and myself. So, I hope that the Board of Education will consider making it six feet of distance in the classroom to help keep everyone safe.

Thank you,
Kristie Hotema

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Chablis Paris <chablisparis@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha kalei,

I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

As a teacher, I am eager to return my students to as close to normal as possible as we deal with the effects of this pandemic. However, I cannot support DOE guidelines that clearly contradict published guidance from the Centers of Disease Control. The 3 feet of separation is not adequate in maintaining enough protective barriers. When considering the behaviors and movement of children when seated, the three feet of space will quickly be breached.

In addition to being a teacher, I am a wife and mother to a High School student and a toddler. Their health and safety is my top priority and I feel the guidance provided direct jeopardizes their health and wellness. As cases continue to rise as the state attempts to reopen i am beginning to feel more anxious about these plans. In addition to our reopening efforts, I fear a further increase of COVID19 cases once schools reopen and we begin to welcome back out of state visitors with more relaxed quarantine measures soon. Our numbers are already at a rate higher than it was when the state initially started the stay at home order.

I want to return to as much of normal as possible, and I am looking forward to welcoming my students back into my classroom, but I do not support DOE's 3 foot guidance and feel they should maintain the 6 foot distancing at all times.

Chablis Mathai
Kapolei Charter School
Social Studies Teacher
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ipolani Medeiros <ipomedeiros@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Kakou,
According to CDC guidelines of reopening schools, the recommendation is 6ft distance between students in the class for social distancing. In my opinion, the BOE recommendation of 3ft distancing is careless and irresponsible. I hope that BOE re-read CDC guidelines and keep all students and staff of DOE schools safe and healthy.
Mahalo,
Ipolani Medeiros

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Discussion Item VI(A)

Kana Naipo <kana_naipo@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:48 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha kākou,
I am Kana Naipo, History, Video Journalism, Yearbook teacher at Castle High School and asking for your help. "... the CDC indicates that placing students and teachers less than six feet apart, especially without face coverings, creates a high risk for the spread of COVID-19. I can't see myself teaching where as my students and I are at risk of infecting our families. Please lets enforce the 6 feet until things go back to "normal"

Mahalo,

Kana Naipo

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kerry Ogawa <kerry.ogawa@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!
My name is Kerry Ogawa and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I am a third grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary School on the island of Hawaii. My child currently attends Waiākea High School.

I was extremely concerned about my family's and my health and safety when the HIDOE released their guidelines stating students in classrooms could be seated 3 feet apart and without masks. This contradicts the Memorandum of Understanding with HSTA and recommendations from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The agreed language states that: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

In addition, the HIDOE did not follow the Board of Education's resolution of "working with togetherness" to ensure that "the health and safety of students and staff is the most important concern of the public education system."

The risk of transfer of COVID-19 within my, or any, classroom would be extremely high with only a 3 feet distance and I cannot take that risk for my health and risking my family's health. My husband is at high risk for COVID-19. He has health ailments that he takes medication for daily due to asthma, high blood pressure, and premature ventricular contractions. My mother lives next door to me, she is 87 years old and has trouble walking and getting around and has a pacemaker.

I hope you consider my testimony in making a fair and just decision for all students, all teachers, and all the families that would be affected by not following the 6 feet guidelines.

Respectfully,
Kerry Ogawa

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for 9 July 2020 General Business Meeting - Seeking to Understand

Justin Bergonio <justin.bergonio@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:52 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon,

My name is Justin Bergonio, a five-year math educator at Waipahu High School. I have never written "testimony" before, but I would like to cast my voice into the void that is this pandemic.

I have found this pandemic has thrown many of us into a whirlwind. For some, the recent stay-at-home orders and mask mandates have proven to be minor inconveniences, while for others it has been major disruptions in their daily lives. I'm trying to come from a place of understanding in which I value the safety of myself and my loved ones, but also to understand the plight and struggles that have befallen other families in these terrible times.

I want to understand why it's not possible to do complete remote learning at this time to limit the spread of this terrible virus. I am a numbers man, and unlike our so-called "President" I can say for a fact that this virus is not "harmless for 99%" or us. Pulling up current case numbers and comparing with the known deaths, we are looking at a 4% death rate. If you blew that up to a student population of 3000 (the largest student population in Hawaii's public school system), that would theoretically be 120 students. That may not sound like much, but each of those is a life that could have been.

Now let's assume that maybe 120 students don't suffer, but instead are just carriers. That's 120 more cases and potentially 120 more affected families. Assuming a four-person household (which may be generous in most Hawaii homes), we are looking at a spread of 840 people. That is one school alone. And we aren't even considering general staff and faculty spread...

However, we do not fully understand this virus, and so maybe these numbers are nothing. I would rather err on the side of caution and say we were foolish, than to risk unnecessary deaths we can't go back from.

So please, help me understand the justification and the risk we are putting on our educators and students for the sake of "being the first in the nation" to show them how it's done because, at the end of the day, this is not a race, but a marathon. And if we decide to expend ourselves too quickly, we may burn out and some of us may not be able to even finish this race. Is that something worth risking?

Sincerely,
Justin R Bergonio

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening of schools

lindajury4@gmail.com <lindajury4@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Linda Jury and I am a teacher at Wai'anae High School and also a parent. My daughter goes to Wai'anae Elementary school. I am writing to express my concern for the Board's decision to allow seating of less than 6ft apart in classrooms, as recommended by the CDC. It is my belief that if everyone in the public needs to practice social distancing as outline with 6ft distancing, why is it that we are not doing that in our schools? As a teacher and parent, I am worried about my family as community being exposed to this deadly virus. The BOE should reconsider the seating arrangements and put the health and safety of our teachers, students, families and communities at the top priority!

With regards,
Linda Jury

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

igemn@hawaii.edu <igemn@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Members of the Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

My name is Michelle Ige and I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate School. I am writing to ask that you honor the contractual agreement with HSTA and mandate a minimum of 6 feet distance between all desks in the classroom. I am already concerned about returning to school with the number of cases rising every day and people failing to wear face masks. It’s even more concerning that more tourists will be arriving in our state from August 1st and this might further increase the risk of coronavirus for everyone in Hawaii. I have older colleagues who have health concerns, younger colleagues who are worried about their babies and pregnancies, and my own family (older parents and relatives) to worry about at home. I am extremely concerned about getting the coronavirus at school and bringing it home to my family. I can’t even begin to imagine how I would feel if I gave the virus to them. I’m sure many colleagues, families of students, and students feel the same.

In a contained space with many students, the risk for contracting the coronavirus will surely rise without the proper guidelines in place, and even with all the guidelines there is still a very real chance that cases may arise among the school population. Please, PLEASE mandate a 6 foot minimum distance between desks and also more strict rules for everyone (including students) to wear face masks in classrooms! How is it safe for multiple people to be in an enclosed space (a room) for an extended period of time without face coverings? If these measures aren’t in place, I feel that it will be very risky to reopen schools in August. I understand that there are many factors to consider and there is pressure from different sides about what to prioritize. However, I’m sure I’m not the only one who feels increasingly uneasy as we get closer to the start of the new year. Please put the health and safety of teachers, students, and school faculty first!

Sincerely,
Michelle Ige

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Cindy Kawamura <cindy.kawamura@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:54 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing regarding discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am opposed to Superintendent Kishimoto's three feet spacing between students. I have concerns about the health and safety of my students and myself. I am at high risk and I have older parents that require weekly check-ins. Students may also expose older kupuna in their home, as well.

The BOE should follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet social distancing that has been preached to us since the beginning of this pandemic. If we are expected to stand 6 feet apart in the grocery store for a short period of time, expecting students to sit in a classroom 3 feet apart for hours does not make sense.

Please consider 6 feet social distancing for our students.

Mahalo,
Cindy Kawamura

--
Mrs. Cindy Kawamura
Pearl City High School
Outreach Social Studies Teacher

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kim Tengan <kimilei@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:56 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. My name is Kimberly Tengan. I am a teacher at H. P. Baldwin High School. I have been at the school for the past twenty years. I know that we are living in unprecedented times, but I don't see why we would be asked to teach using 3 ft distance when throughout the pandemic the distancing has been 6ft. By decreasing the distancing, we risk the chance of students becoming infected and possibly shutting our schools down completely again. I do not want to see this happen again. We need to value our students. Our students lost out on a whole quarter last school year. They do not deserve this. If everywhere else requires six foot distancing, it should also be the standard for schools.

Sincerely

Kimberly Tengan

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jenna Ballo <jennastanleyballo@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
My name is Jenna Ballo. I am a 5th grade teacher at Waiakea Elementary School. I also have children who attend Waiakea Elementary, Waiakea Intermediate and Waiakea High School. I also have a newborn son that was just born in June.

As parent and teacher, I am deeply concerned about the DOE's plan to put students at 3 feet distances instead of 6 feet. Why is it that our children and DOE staff are to be SACRIFICED all for the good of the states economy. Yes, the economy is important but the lives of students and staff are of even more importance. As a parent, can you guarantee that my child will not contract Coronavirus from being in school with 3 feet distance in between them and the next student? And to top it off, the superintendent wants to relax mask rules? Yes, it is uncomfortable for myself and my children including a 6 year old. However, I'd rather have them wear a mask to school then have to see them hooked up to a ventilator or in a grave. Is the state ready for lawsuits from parents who send their kids to school and have them get sick? After all, the state (specifically DOH AND DOE) is going against current CDC guidelines in which they recommend 6 feet of distance between people. I along with a lot of other parents view this as negligence on the part of the state. Parents are already feeling uneasy about sending their children back to schools. Why would you make it harder by increasing the numbers in the class? Would you like parents to pull students from schools and homeschool instead? I feel that if you should have to stand 6 feet from someone in line at a store, then why not in a school where the future of our state spend so much time. For anyone who has been in a classroom, they already know how it is literally impossible to socially distance students from each other. However, frustratingly those making decisions about education are often ignorant to how a classroom really runs. I invite you to spend a week or even a day in my classroom to see firsthand.

As a loving parent and dedicated educator, I implore the state, our legislators, our Department of Education, and our Department of Health to put students and the adults who care for them in the schools first. Choose them over money. It'll be impossible to know if we did too much but it'll be very apparent if we didn't do enough. I'd hate to find out we didn't do enough when it's too late.

Thank you for your time.
Jenna Ballo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please Reconsider 3ft Guideline

ellis.leilani@gmail.com <ellis.leilani@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 7:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Leilani Yamauchi. I teach First Grade at Waihe'e School. This upcoming school year will be my 10th year as a teacher to lower elementary students.

Please reconsider your 3ft guideline for social distancing in classrooms and go with the CDC recommendation of 6ft. In a classroom filled with 5-7 year olds, coughing, sneezing, running noses, are a common day to day thing. Keeping them farther apart from each other can ensure the safety of everyone in the classroom environment.

Also, if we are expected to 6ft social distance in public why not carry on that same expectation in schools. Children are already being taught this out in public so let's not confuse them in their school environment.

Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

kathryntonaki1@hawaiiantel.net <kathryntonaki1@hawaiiantel.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 20-21 School Year. I'm asking the Board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with 6 ft between student desks.

Per the CDC, social and physical distancing is the only way to protect ourselves from COVID 19. My husband has underlying health conditions and I also care for my elderly mother who is at very high risk should she contract this deadly disease. I need the Board to ensure that my well being at school will be secured by taking every necessary precaution as prescribed by the CDC. I cannot afford to place my loved ones at risk should the Board not adhere to the CDC guidelines.

Sincerely,

Kathy Tonaki

Highlands Intermediate

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Zan Timtim <zanzibar722@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As a parent, I am very concerned for the safety of my children at school. I do not feel the plan that the DOE has put out is sufficient to provide a safe atmosphere for the students and the staff.

1. There should be 6 feet distance in ALL DIRECTIONS for the students and the teachers. Their 3 feet allowance for as long as the students are seated facing the same direction is unacceptable. It is ludicrous to think that the students won't turn their heads right or left to talk to their fellow classmates.
2. Mask should be ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED for EVERYONE at ALL TIMES.
3. 100% distance learning should be an option for parents & students until this pandemic is adequately contained and it's safe for everyone.
4. The DOE, BOE and the schools should be prepared for possible lawsuits if a student gets sick/dies from catching the corona virus in school if the school DID NOT follow the CDC guidelines.

Please, do not rush opening the schools until it is absolutely safe for EVERYONE. That should be the priority!

My son Avan Timtim will be entering the 10th grade at Waipahu High School.
My daughter Teagan Timtim will be entering the 8th grade at Waipahu Intermediate.

Thank you for your kind attention to this very important manner.

Mahalo,
Zan Timtim
Mother

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Heather Paulino <paulinomohs@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am writing this testimony to ask the Board of Education to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Please think of the health and well-being of students, teachers and staff.

Thank you,

Heather Paulino

Teacher

Moanalua High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rosemarie C Rawlins <rose627@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.
Rosemarie Rawlins
SPED teacher
He'eia Elementary, Windward District
My children both attend He'eia Elementary and Castle High School and I feel as both a teacher and parent that exposing myself and my children to others using the 3 ft. Guidance is unacceptable! In public, I already feel scared with the 6 ft. Distance rule in place with masks and I do not feel safe knowing that we will be 3feet without masks in schools. We are risking the health and safety of our fellow staff and students by implementing those guidelines. This is an urgent cry as a parent and teacher to follow the health and safety guidelines set forth by CDC of 6ft minimum distance was with masks in the school setting. Please help keep our keiki safe.
Rosemarie Rawlins
--

Rosemarie Rawlins
rose627@gmail.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lauren Shinozuka <lshinozuka@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good evening,

My name is Lauren Shinozuka, and I am a teacher at H.P. Baldwin High School. I write to you today with concerns about Discussion Item VI(A): Reopening of schools. Reopening schools with the current guidelines is unacceptable. Allowing students to be only 3 feet apart endangers our students, their families, and our community. I have many colleagues who fall into a high risk category, and while we do commit our livelihoods to serving the public as public school educators, none of us should be in the position to risk our lives. I hope the DOE recognizes its negligence and will take steps to ensure that our communities stay safe during this pandemic.

Thank you for your time,
Lauren Shinozuka
H.P. Baldwin High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

NOHEBAYBEH <baybehlove18@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:06 PM
Reply-To: baybehlove18@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Iam testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”
My 2 childern have asthma and i fear that reopening in august is too soon. If these cases are still going/ still have, they will not be going to school. We need a better plan then 3ft apart. It needs to be 6ft. And a staggered schedule. I know education is important but there health is more important. As a parent with asthma and my children has it, really difficult for them to get better when sick. Iam the only parent bringing in income so i need to work if my children gets sick i have to take off to take care of them we cant afford it.
Regards nohelani, salt lake elem.
Thank you.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Taylor <ccsoccermom@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Not abiding by the CDC guidelines to maintain six feet sends the wrong message to our communities.
Families are being kept apart right now because they are complying with CDC guidelines. Residents, business owners, and patrons of our islands are also complying with CDC guidelines, which includes maintaining six feet.
Our communities trust us to make excellent, safe, and sound educated decisions.

Bottom line: If just one student/staff member becomes infected with COVID-19 while on our campuses, the BOE will be sued for neglect and failure to comply with CDC guidelines. Is this the message we want to send to our families and communities that trust us with their children's lives?

Mahalo,
Taylor Stokesbary
Kau Pahala Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Bronwyn Tatman <bronwyntatman@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello BOE:
My name is Bronwyn Tatman and I am a teacher at Maui High school and a parent of a middle schooler at Kalama. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. It is deplorable that Superintendent Kishimoto has gone back on her agreement with HSTA and the communities of Hawai'i to keep us all safer by mandating a 6 foot distance between students and teachers. Teachers are not the world's babysitters and if we absolutely have to go to school during a pandemic, the least our leaders can do is institute rules that attempt to keep us safe. Please help.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sunshine Pascual <sunshinepascual@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:14 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a first grade teacher at Wilcox Elementary and a parent of 3 children who are attending 3 different public schools on the island of Kauai. I strongly DO NOT agree with the 3 foot social distance rule in the classrooms. I DO NOT want my own children near others who don't wear masks & only 3 feet apart. I want the BOE to enforce 6 foot distance in all classrooms and please require the use of masks for everyone at all times. DO NOT make masks in the classroom an option!!

Thank you,
Sunshine Badua
Parent of 3 children &
Teacher at Wilcox Elementary

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

July 6, 2020

Aloha,

My name is Michele Taketa, and I am a 4th grade teacher at Makawao School on Maui.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am writing to implore you to set 6 feet as the recommended social distance for students and teachers in the classroom as originally agreed upon in the meeting between Superintendent Kishimoto, the state, and HSTA. The recently released health and safety guidance of three feet spacing without masks directly contradicts the agreement with the state and recommendations by the CDC. The CDC indicates that placing students and teachers less than six feet apart, especially without face coverings, creates a high risk for the spread of COVID-19.

Listed below are more reasons why six feet distancing should be adhered to:

- In a recent simulation study, conducted by scientists, of the spread of droplets emitted by a cough in an indoor space, it was shown that without a mask, these droplets spread past 12 feet. With a bandana type mask they spread past 3.5 feet and with cloth masks 2.5 inches. Even with masks, there was leakage and the droplets remained in the air for hours. Therefore, it is logical that along with making the wearing of masks mandatory in the classroom, the 6-feet distancing would further ensure the safety and health of both students and teachers within the classroom.

- From my experiences teaching and working with students for over thirty years, I have found that during the course of the day, many students will have the tendency to turn to the side or back to speak to other students. They will also get up out of their seats to get a tissue, water, go to the restroom, etc. With only 3 feet distance between and around each student, you increase the likelihood of the spread of droplets and potentially the disease.

- As a teacher, I've found that when students are working independently at their seats, they often need assistance. Collaboration amongst the students will no longer be feasible, so I will need to wander the classroom even more than I usually do to provide assistance. I would not feel safe doing this with only 3 feet between desks.

- The 3 feet guideline was meant for children. A classroom is not made up of only children and includes me, the teacher, and possibly other adults. Children may not be infected with the Covid-19 virus, but often report to school with runny noses, mild coughs, and other symptoms that potentially affect our immune systems and make us more susceptible to contracting the disease should we be exposed.

- Due to age, I fall within the high-risk category for contracting the disease. I also work with colleagues who are at risk or care for family members who fall within the high-risk range. With the reopening of businesses, celebrations, and air travel between islands and to our islands, there has been an increase in cases. Therefore, I believe greater precautions need to be taken at this time, which along with proper hygiene and frequent cleaning and disinfecting, should include the wearing of masks by teachers and students and at least 6 feet distancing for the health and safety of all.

- The decision to reduce the distance of student desk placements to 3 feet is causing my colleagues and myself extreme anxiety. This may directly impact our delivery of instruction to our students. Some educators with children are considering home schooling cohorts. I personally was planning to retire within the next few years, but may need to consider retiring sooner for the sake of my physical and emotional health.

- In South Korea, Israel, and Beijing, schools had to be shut down after they reopened. In Texas and South Africa, we have seen staff contracting the virus at twice the rates of students. Closing schools or forcing teachers to choose jobs over their health will not help our teachers or our keiki.

Please reconsider honoring the agreement made with HSTA on six feet distancing of students within classrooms. I pride myself on being a professional educator and have always been an advocate for the health, safety, social emotional wellbeing, and education of my students. That being said, "I am an educator. I am not a babysitter. I am not expendable and neither are my students."

Mahalo for your time and consideration!

Respectfully,
Michele Taketa

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Alec Shimizu <pubspace1@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony regarding Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

It is my understanding that the DOE is planning to reopen schools with a 3-foot social distancing rule in place. Why in the world would we require the rest of society to stay a minimum of 6-feet apart *but not require that of our students*?

Initially, the DOE said they would require 6-feet front-to-back but 3-feet was okay side-to-side. Are they thinking that our students won't talk to their classmates on their left and right? This didn't make sense to me at all. But now the DOE is saying a 3-foot circumference is safe.

This is completely unacceptable to me as a teacher and as a parent because the CDC and DOH both require 6-foot social distancing. Please advocate on behalf of our keiki and require the DOE to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with 6-feet between desks.

Mahalo,
Alec Shimizu

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re opening Schools Safely

Ronda <kamalanigoo@aol.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I want to share how disappointed I am in the Hawaii Dept. Of Education's Re-opening plan for schools. I fail to understand why students are wearing face masks all day for Summer Fun or other programs but will not be required to in school which is counter to recommendations to the public by the CDC & the Dept. Of Health (except when talking about DOE). I am also dumbfounded by the arbitrary 3 foot social distancing that the DOE is promoting which is also contrary to CDC & Dept. Of Health recommendations. I am aware that the Hotels, Restaurants & other businesses supported by tourism want to reopen but at the risk to teachers (HSTA members) and students? Why is it okay to have fewer protections in place at schools than in restaurants or stores? Rooms, bathrooms, water fountains and high touch areas are only being cleaned at the end of the school day. Why is it that again restaurants, stores & businesses are cleaned more frequently? I'm appalled that I will have to return to work in such dangerous & unhealthy circumstances. If I could afford to leave the DOE after more than 20 years of service, this would be the time. Please think about the consequences of reopening schools with what Dr. Kishimoto is proposing and say no to her plan. I hope that you (BOE members) will advocate for safe classrooms & a safe environment for everyone on our public school campuses.
Sincerely,
R. Goo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kauwe, Shay <shay@kauwe.net> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Shay Zykova and I am a 9th grade SPED ELA teacher at Waianae High School. I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I was appalled to hear that an agreement was made to allow students to be no more than three feet apart without masks when in class. Our school is planning to open with around fifteen students in a class at a time. Including myself and an EA, that would mean 17 people total in a tiny, portable classroom. I don't understand how this can be acceptable when the state is still limiting contact at 10 people for things like small gatherings.

I also am someone who wants schools to return to normal, but not at the risk of our students nor our fellow educators. For example, I have several pregnant teacher-friends who are considering taking a year off out of fear that they would contract COVID-19 in such cramped quarters, or are concerned about bringing the disease back home with them to their own families.

It seems obvious that, at the very least, masks should be mandated for students when in school. While allowances for students with health problems, of course, should be made, the majority of students should be able to comply with no danger to themselves. In fact, not wearing a mask would be even more dangerous.

I've seen schools from across the world providing students with transparent barriers, or spaced out far apart from their peers. Many private schools are providing students with masks and shields to better calm the worries of their parents. Why are our public school keiki being treated like an occupational hazard? Like their health, and the health of their families is something that can so easily be put at risk?

Our schools absolutely should be reopened as planned, but not at the risk of the lives of our students and teachers.

Sincerely,
Shay Zykova

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Casey Dumadag <littlecaycam@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

i'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

my child will be attending ewa elementary school. please please please have them be 6 feet away at all times and practice social distancing.

Thank you!
Casey Dumadag
littleCayCam

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Moku <jenmoku@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,
I am a librarian at Ala Wai Elementary School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I strongly feel a six foot distance is the only way to keep our children and teachers safe for the following reasons:

I am a twenty-five year veteran teacher and have been around children long enough to know that the students will turn around in their chairs to face their friends or even hear classmates speak as we've taught them to look at others while speaking. A three foot distance is not enough to keep the students safe.

In August and September our classrooms are over one hundred degrees. Our students will not be able to wear a mask consistently. It will be harmful to the health of our Ala Wai community to ask our students and teachers to keep a mask on for most of the day. At six feet apart, students and teachers will be able to have mask breaks more often.

Lastly, my daughters both have asthma and I am a caregiver for my seventy-six year old mother. I am very concerned for my own health. I do not want to contract the virus and would like to do everything in my control to protect my family. It has been proven that the virus is not passed on as easily if we use the six foot social distancing rule.

I love my job and I love my students. Please know that I have contemplated leaving or taking a break from this wonderful profession because I do not feel that we are ready to reopen and we do not have the safety measures in place to reopen. I will go back to work but I am doing so reluctantly and afraid that my life is in danger.

Thank you for reading my testimony. I know you will not take my words lightly and you will do the right thing by mandating a six foot distance between students.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Moku
Ala Wai Elementary School
Librarian

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft is not ok

miss nike <ms_nike_808@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: 10015361@k12.hi.us

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:27 PM

Dear BOE Members,

Aloha! My name is Kelli Miike-Lee and I am a teacher at Kaimuki Middle School. I am asking you to consider the safety of my students, me, and my family by following the six feet social distancing rule. Three feet is not okay.

The stress of providing in person and online curriculum is crazy in itself. Please do not ask me to increase my stress level by worrying about contracting the virus! I care for my parents who are in their 80s as well as an infant and I do not want to jeopardize their health and safety.

Please rethink the three feet rule. The health and safety of our keiki, teachers, and their families are in your hands. And, I hope your hands are clean!!

Thank you for your consideration!

Smiles, 😀
Kelli Miike-Lee

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

samlorisari@aol.com <samlorisari@aol.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:28 PM
Reply-To: samlorisari@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am an educator testifying on Discussion Item VI (A) Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School year.

Lori M. Kwee
Ala Wai School

Working with aloha towards opening schools in the fall, I am very concerned with the contradictions of health guidelines with DOE, BOE, and state of Hawaii with safety and health as top priority. I do not feel safe in an environment teaching students in a classroom with limited space for physical distancing. I disagree with the agreement stating spacing students seats three feet apart without masks was acceptable. Please hear our teachers' voices as we express our concerns to take time to collaborate on best practices. lets work together to share aloha.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Malika Nahina <malika.nahina@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Malika Nahina, teacher at Mililani High School, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I urge you to ensure that the highest standards for health and safety are followed in order to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. Our students, their families, and all teachers and staff must be provided the safest possible environment for learning and 3 feet spacing between students is insufficient.

Without healthy teachers and students learning will not take place. Our health and safety must always be the priority.

Aloha,
Malika Nahina

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Celeste Kamiya <cmarie444@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am testifying for Discussion IV (A) comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. I am a teacher and an HSTA member. For the safety of myself and my students, please allow no less than six feet apart when we are in and out of the classroom. I am a fourth grade teacher from Pearl Harbor Elementary.

Thank you,
Celeste Kamiya

Sent from my iPad

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Leah Nakayama <nakohana_6@msn.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Leah Nakayama and I am a kindergarten teacher at kualapu'u School. My son will be a 6th grader at the same school.
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
I am writing to ask the board to please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with 6 feet between student desks.

Your plan to re-enter students & teachers to school has me feeling insecure and uncomfortable. You are jeopardizing the health and safety of our youngest citizens by blatantly going against the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Studies have confirmed that droplets travel beyond 3-feet. In addition, the CDC guidelines state that a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing if a mask is worn.

It is my understanding that students will be allowed to remove their masks after initial entrance onto campus every day. It is understandable. However, taking off their masks along with sitting only 3-feet apart from each other puts them at risk. Let me reiterate, a 6-feet minimum measurement is suggested for social distancing IF A MASK IS WORN.

According to the plan, the 3-feet distance will work IF students are facing forward at all times while in the classroom. As a kindergarten and first grade teacher for 23 years I can tell you they will turn and talk to each other, a lot! Your ideal scenario of students "only looking forward" while sitting in the classroom inhibits our students from ENGAGING (from a safe distance) and learning. This is irrational.

I am apprehensive about returning to the classroom under these circumstances. Your 3-feet component of the plan will put many students & educators in harm's way. Please revise this plan to reflect your concern and care for our health and safety.

Thank you,
Leah Nakayama

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Travis <jenniferleetravis@me.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Jennifer Travis, I teach at Lokelani Intermediate school on Maui. The only model of instruction that our principal has presented to us is Model A. She wants all the kids to come back 100% face-to-face, she has not presented us with any details on how we will handle things like recess, lunchtime, passing between classes- or how classrooms will be sanitized between groups of people.
She is expecting us to teach 5, 53 minute periods per day and she is planning to give the kids two recesses. The second recess is to take the place of our PLC time.
She has not discussed who is supervising the recesses or how the recesses will be conducted, but if it is PLC time- teachers should not be asked to supervise.

She talked about Shoulder to shoulder and the 3 feet distancing. Our classrooms are not large enough to accommodate even 3 feet distancing, let alone 6 feet distancing. And that assumes that the kids are still in their seats and face forward. Our current furniture- double student desks in most room cannot accomodate this either
They are not planning to do things like temperature checks nor has she explain the protocol when we discovered that a student is sick, coughing, or diagnosed with Covid19.

This principal is notorious for coming to school late,
Pulling in at 8:30 in the morning- after all the students are already there- and She is often seen it in the parking lot right after school is over, many times at 2:35 in her car in the parking lot. I am not sure who is going to be responsible to make sure that the students are Staying safe.
She will probably stay in her office all day and avoid making contact with students or staff- but she is pushing for having all the students on campus full time. Total lack of leadership which has been par for the course.

I feel this is total disregard for the health and safety of her teachers, support staff and students.

Please- the union needs to protect the health of all- ALL LIVES MATTER!!!

Aloha from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

James Dingus <dingus4@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Teachers, and everyone else, should be safe!
6 feet in schools!
Protect kids and their teachers.
Space is vital.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Chuyang Huang <chuyanghuang@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:42 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear sir,

My name is Chuyang Baideme. I am a teacher at Kalani High School. I am in my 60s.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

For the safety of our students, faculty and the community, I don't think having just 3 feet distance in classroom and without mandatory requirement of wearing mask is acceptable. First, the 3-feet distance is directly contradictory to the agreement that the state has made with our union. Second it contradicts the recommendation by the CDC guidelines of 6 feet distance. Third, it is contradictory to the Covid-19 rules made by the mayor of Honolulu City and County, which requires mask wearing in both indoors and outdoors of public place. A classroom is a public place.

I am writing to hope we all honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks and make it mandatory for everyone on campus, students and staff to wear face masks.

Thank you,

Sincerely
Chuyang Baideme

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Marta <martafinley@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Marta Finley. I retired last year from Kealakehe Elementary School after 32 years of teaching. My grandson will be attending Kindergarten at Kealakehe this school year. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A) Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The last 2 years of my career, I was a Kindergarten teacher. I do not think a 6 foot separation between students is realistic expectation for lower grades. Perhaps in Intermediate or High School it could work but I feel 3 feet with kids facing the same direction is sufficient. I would guess many students don't social distance outside of school. Wearing a mask should be more important in my opinion. In addition, washing hands and sanitizing desks and equipment should be a priority. Children are social beings so further than 3 feet, kids will be up and about, making it more difficult for the teacher.

I would also like to mention that the DOE is mandating a protocol but we are not all in the same boat. With very few active cases on the outer islands, there is no reason students cannot start the year as usual. As I understand from rumors I've heard, students in the Kealakehe Complex will only be attending school in person 2 days a week. Since both my grandson's parents work, as many other parents do, this will be an extreme dilemma for parents needing to get back to work. As an experienced, retired educator, I could work with my grandson but many children won't be as fortunate. I feel sad for the loss of learning that will occur. I home-schooled my grandson when his preschool shut down. It was not not an easy task.

Once the state opens mainland travel, COVID-19 cases would need to be followed and adjustments on each island could be made accordingly. But it seems like on Hawaii island, we could get off to a regular start, if COVID-19 doesn't blow up in the next 3 weeks. And it would help the many working parents that have no idea what is coming since the schools have not released their plans. Parents need to be informed now.

These are not easy decisions to make. Please take my testimony into consideration.

Sincerely,
Marta Finley

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Emily Wong <ms.wong.emily@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I disagree on 3ft distancing between students in the classroom. As mostly a primary elementary teacher, I see that the younger ones especially can't keep to themselves for the whole school day either at their desk or on the carpet during circle time/instruction time. With only the 3 ft distance, they will still turn to each other even if they were to face all towards the front of the class. I feel 6ft should be the distance between students since it will be harder for the students to touch or play with each other in the classroom.

Emily Wong
Lanakila Elementary

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Shannon De Leon <shncdeleon@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**. My children attend Pauoa Elementary and Kawananakoa Middle School.

I am already struggling with the thought of sending my children back to school at all considering our cases have not gone down. I still do not feel it is safe.

I especially cannot fathom the thought of sending my child to school if they will only be 3 feet apart from each other, knowing full well how difficult is is going to be for small children to sit still with a mask on in an un-airconditioned 99 degree room in the first place. I just can't wrap my head around how anyone thinks that is going to work for any elementary or middle school aged child. I can teach them to wear masks and wash hands but at the end of the day they are children and slip ups happen. We as leaders, parents, and educators should do all that we can to be prepared and prevent those situations from happening.

We NEED at least 6 feet of space between each student or else any attempt at social distancing is moot. We need to show our teachers and kids that they are just as valued and protected as a Costco or foodland customer. We need to teach them 6 feet apart consistently, evergwhefe they go. We need them to be 6 feet apart because the health of our Keiki, Teachers, and Ohana should be the number one priority right now.

Please consider putting our children and teachers health and safety first and ensure that there will be 6 feet between them! Already aloha, not germs!

Mahalo,

Shannon De Leon
808-294-6738
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony-Returning to school has me fearful for my family's life

Brad Kusunoki <bradkusunoki@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Brad Kusunoki and I am a school counselor at Alvah Scott Elementary in Aiea. I am also a father of two boys, ages 1 and 4. For the first time ever, I fear for my family's life. I fear that when school resumes, I will not have enough protections in place and will get covid-19, just by being at school. I am terrified of this because my 4 year old son has had breathing problems and I worry what might happen if he catches it. With the current guidelines set forth regarding 3 feet of distance with masks being optional, my terror is becoming reality.

Please, I am begging you to look out for my family and do what is needed to keep everybody safe. I had never imagined that I would be begging for my life and I cannot believe that I am doing this because education seems to be more important than human safety in the eyes of my employer.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message.

Brad Kusunoki

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

re: TESTIMONY

KAMMtheHAMM Hulama <cchulama@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:47 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

It is quite disconcerting that Gov. Ige is considering opening up schools while forewarning the public that he may close gyms and bars amid a spike in cases. Not to mention impending furloughs and pay cuts for "civil servants" including DOE staff.

Families have knowingly sent their children to school because they have no sitters. What happens when they send their asymptomatic child to school? Who takes responsibility for the financial burden put on staff who have to stay home to quarantine? Who will check on the entire student body and follow up with families?

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Vanessa Picon <vanessa.picon@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Vanessa Knoepfel, I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.
I have been teaching for five years in Hawaii, and I am currently working at Kahalu'u Elementary School. I would like to
ask the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Having students sit three feet
apart when side by side will not work. Students will naturally want to face each other and will turn to talk. It is not safe and it goes against CDC recommendations to do this.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rockwell Bounos <rockwell.bounos@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Rockwell Bounos and I am a special education classroom teacher and IEP care coordinator at James B. Castle High School in Kaneohe. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I am very concerned about resuming in-person classes with the newly mentioned 3-feet distance between student desks and no mandatory face mask. For the past 5 years I've been at Castle, I have gotten sick at least once per year and it is always sometime between November-February. I will either get a cold or fever and I am not the only one who gets sick. Sometimes it starts with one or two students, then spreads to my EAs in class or other paraprofessionals and eventually I get sick as well.

With these new 3-ft apart rules and no facemasks, I am concerned that not having stricter boundaries of 6-ft apart is going to be very hectic and I am likely to get sick again. While I understand that this is an annual thing for me, I am especially concerned with COVID-19 and believe that both students and teachers must be supported and have 6 feet distance between student desks. It is also highly suspect that after an MOU is reached between the BOE and HSTA that these guidelines are released. It feels very unsupportive and disingenuous on the part of the BOE to state these guidelines after the MOU was reached.

Mahalo for your time,

Rockwell Bounos
Teacher
James B. Castle High School
(808) 305-0895

--
Rockwell Bounos
Special Education Teacher/IEP Coordinator
James B. Castle High School
45-386 Kaneohe Bay Drive
Kaneohe, HI 96744

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Julia Mew <jumew2@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. My name is Julia Mew and I am a teacher at Moanalua Middle School . Please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. Protect our teachers and students by following recommendations from the experts at the CDC. Currently, we are seeing the harmful effects when states do not follow guidelines for reopening as cases of COVID 19 continue to rise at alarming rates on the mainland.

Let's show that Hawai'i cares about its people.

Mahalo,
Julia Mew

Sent from Julia's iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jennifer Scelsa <jscelsa86@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. My name is Jennifer Hirokawa and I am currently a 2nd grade teacher at Ewa Elementary School. Please help to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. This is a stressful time for all the least we can do is make sure our classrooms are as safe as possible.
Thank you for your consideration.
Jennifer Hirokawa

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lt Jav <javlt@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:55 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

RE: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 20-21 School Year

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

Dear Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Lorie Javier. I am a teacher in the Leeward District, Oahu.

As you know, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends social distancing in conjunction with hand washing, face coverings, disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, and monitoring health daily as steps everyone should do to protect themselves.

According to the CDC: "Social distancing, also called "physical distancing," means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces." cdc.gov, July 6, 2020

Leading epidemiologists do not consider distances less than 6 feet effective for the purposes of reducing exposure to COVID-19 or other disease agents spread by respiratory droplets. Additionally, it is not reasonable to believe that students sitting 3 feet apart will not periodically turn their heads and talk to each other, or turn their heads and sneeze, just because their seats are facing forward. We cannot afford to accept learning spaces that are intentionally and knowingly set up below standard. Schools need clear guidance based on science to put into action the best workplace controls (engineering and administrative) to protect teachers, staff, and students from exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

Please do not allow the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Health to provide schools with guidance that will put children, teachers, school staff and their families at greater risk.

Respectfully,
Lorie Javier
Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Vivi L <vibrantv808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Name: Viviana Law-Tran
School: Kalani High School and Kaimuki Middle School

Do not allow only 3-foot distancing in classrooms; this is dangerous and jeopardizes the health of students, teachers, and their family. Covid 19 is a virus that is airborne and at least 6-foot distancing is necessary. The use of face masks and/or face shields should be required.

Testimony

Darci Singlehurst <darci.singlehurst@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Discussion Item VI(A) Presentation on DOE Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools plan for SY 20-21:
My name is Darci Singlehurst. I am a Resource Teacher for Windward District, serving both Preschool and Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. I am in my late fifties, and I care for my parents here in Kailua. I am concerned for my health and safety, as well as my family's, in returning to work once school reopens. At a minimum, I feel all CDC guidelines need to be adhered to. Anything less would be reckless, and unnecessarily putting staff health and lives at risk. We need to strictly adhere to 6 feet apart guidelines, at a minimum. Everyone needs to wear face masks. Disinfecting needs to be taken seriously, and done by professionals. We all have the right to feel safe in our work environments.
I have 13 years experience teaching 3 and 4 year olds in Special Education preschool classrooms. It is not possible to expect this age group to be able adhere to social distancing guidelines, or even wear a face mask. This is also probably the most difficult population to service via distance learning. I understand these are difficult challenges, but risking the health of everyone involved is not an appropriate solution. We are in a pandemic. Things are not supposed to be normal. These are exceptional times that require extraordinary accomodations. Please don't risk the health and safety of our keiki and teachers!
Sincerely,
Darci Singlehurst

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen <tiffaniekspencer@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen and I am an elementary school teacher at Makaha Elementary and I am also a mother of two children who attend Ho'okele Elementary. As a teacher and as a parent I DO NOT feel that the 3 feet distance between students and the relaxation of masks is safe for all involved. If we have to keep 6 feet apart in a grocery store why is it we are decreasing it to 3 feet in our schools. People spend less time in a grocery store than what our Keiki spend in school. Please reconsider as you are jeopardizing the Heath and safety for all of us.

Sincerely,
Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

SH 77 <silverhonu77@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:03 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha esteemed Board Members,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Anjanette Naganuma. I am from Maui and teach at Lahainaluna High School. My son will be a 5th grader at Princess Nahienaena this coming school year.

For me, the health and safety of my child, myself, my students, and my colleagues are paramount as schools reopen for the fall. I am facing the possibility of having to deliver face-to-face and distance instruction Monday through Friday while my son will likely attend school on alternate days. My husband is a full-time "essential worker" and his employer requires all employees to wear a mask and operates at reduced capacity to provide for social distancing. His parents live with us and would provide childcare while we are at work. Both grandparents over 70 years old: grandma is a cancer survivor and grandfather has COPD. Both my husband and my son have asthma.

Six feet minimum of distancing is the CDC recommendation and the agreed-upon distance between HIDOE and HSTA.

Thank you for prioritizing the health and safety of the community by enforcing the six feet of minimum distancing.

Sincerely,

Anjanette Naganuma
Lahainaluna High School, Maui

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening of Schools

RAYNETTE KWAN <kailee92@aol.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:04 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As an Educator (EA) for 30 years. I don't feel comfortable with schools reopening in August. As we all know that students need to be in the classroom but due to the spike of COVID 19 and how's its attacking the younger generations. I really feel their safety is more important at this time. We can always open the classroom later on when this pandemic slows down or a vaccine is made.
Thank you!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Maribel Perez <maribel94112@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:07 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a parent I am testifying on Discussion item VI(A): Presentation in Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 school year.

It’s very dangerous to allow children to “social distance” with just 3 feet apart!
I am very concerned for the safety of my daughter at school and her classmates. It’s not safe for the children nor the teachers to be just 3 feet apart! Please don’t put our children and educators at risk!!!
Please reconsider safety measures for children and educators!

Thank you!

-Maribel Perez

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's Comprehensive Plan for reopening

Toni Tasaka-alapai <toni.tasaka-alapai@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon,

For 26 years, I have been a teacher in Hawaii, teaching on my home island of Kauai. I love my job as a middle school teacher, but I must say that I am very disappointed and frankly, was taken aback with the decision of Dr. Kishimoto and the Department of Education regarding the 3ft social distancing. After coming to an agreement with HSTA, Dr. Kishimoto went ahead and reported to the media that 3ft social distancing would be ok in schools. How can she go against CDC guidelines stating that 6ft social distancing is key to preventing the spread of COVID? It is even worse because it was said AFTER an agreement was made in the MOU and presented to the teachers.

This blatant disregard for the health and welfare of the teachers and students show that the DOE and Dr. Kishimoto cares more about bowing down to those who are pushing for schools to re-open, without thinking about the consequences on our teachers and students. Many of our teachers are immunocompromised and will be risking their lives by going into the schools to teach. Is it worth having to close the schools once again due to COVID infections?

It is also becoming clear that the DOE and Dr. Kishimoto already had a plan in mind when refusing to use words such as "will" and "shall", instead choosing the word "should" in the MOU. It is unclear who will make the decision when it comes to enforcement of wearing masks and the required 6ft social distancing (now 3ft). It also leaves the door open with phrases such as, "whenever possible" or where ever possible". Who decides that?

Please listen to those of us on the front lines in the classroom. Do not put our lives and the lives of our students and families at risk.

Thank you,
Toni Tasaka-Alapai
Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School
Kauai district
--
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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

llow <llow08@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a high school teacher with 21 years of experience as a teacher in the DOE. I have a compromised immune system and do not want to have students any closer than 6 ft. apart. The new recommendation is 10 ft. Particles/droplets have proven to linger and are infecting more at a faster rate.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

Provide PPE is only a start. Keeping a distance of 6-10ft. would help but not solve the problem. Temperature check of each student and many fans to blow the air out the room would help the most.

Regards,
Lynette Low
Teacher at Kaimuki High School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Joy Okano <joy.okano@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
I am testifying on the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. My name is Joy Okano and I am an English teacher at Moanalua High School. My 10-year-old daughter attends Moanalua Elementary School. I also have a newborn baby girl who is 3 months old and will be in the care of my elderly parents whom are 83 and 79 years old while I am at work every day. My father has diabetes and a heart condition that requires him to have a pacemaker.

It is IMPERATIVE that all students and teachers wear a face mask and that students sit at minimum 6 feet apart in the classroom with a face mask. Three feet without a face mask is utterly hazardous to everyone's health and well being, and not just the students and teachers but their families at home as well.

The fact that all other people are mandated to wear face masks in public and social distance at 6 feet, but then NOT require it for students and teachers in an educational setting is ridiculous. I cannot risk my health and my family's health because of this decision to not uphold the 6 feet social distancing with face masks.

Sincerely,
Joy Okano

Sent from my iPhone

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Mr. D C <carterd021@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Day,

I am both the father of a public school student and husband to a public school teacher. Recently the Superintendent discussed the COVID-19 protocols to be deployed and I have several concerns. First the CDC believes acceptable social distancing is established by 6ft or more but comments from the Superintendent allows for 3ft, this is unacceptable. Mandate the 6ft distance. Consistency with SOPs is the only way to flatten the viral curve. Mandate on school property masks for all that do not possess a doctor's certified prohibitive medical condition. Lastly, mandate a thermal temporal scan daily for all students and staff. Most of us in Hawall live in homes three to four generations deep and failing to deploy all of the above no matter how minimal the benefits my seem to some, is negligent and reckless on the part of Hawaii's DOE. Let's not fail our families and friends attempting to be politically correct. Let's do all we can to keep our Ohana safe while educating.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Mr. D C <carterd021@hawaii.rr.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:21 PM

[Quoted text hidden]
D.Carter

Mililani High School

Iroquois Point Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Hilary White <hillysplace@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To: BOE
My name is Hilary White and I am the kindergarten teacher at Kaaawa Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am concerned about decreasing the distance between students and teachers for the following reasons:

1) I am at high risk as a mature asthmatic, living with my retired husband who also has breathing issues.

2) The CDC suggests 6’ spacing between people for all social interactions between unrelated/ non-household members. Why do we deserve less than what the experts are advising?

3) Many of our students live in multigenerational households that include infants to kupuna, who are at higher risk.

Lastly,

4) Our agreement with the state is to maintain six(6) feet or two arms length of separation between students and teachers. Anything less contradicts the agreement between the HSTA and State.

Please enforce the 6’ distance.

Sincerely,

Hilary White
Kaaawa Elementary School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Does Not Agree with 3 ft Rule

Troy Takano <ttakano46@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

Thanks for taking the time to read my email. I humbly believe that the expectation of having the students be 3' apart from one another is unrealistic for our keiki and any children for that matter as they will most likely be in contact with one another with being in such close proximity to one another. Im having a difficult time understanding why CDC guidelines aren't followed (6 ft clear) as that's what society is currently following. We should set the example for our keiki.

Thanks,
Troy Takano

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

donna montalvo <montalvo_donna@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel that we are getting the short end of the guidelines— 3 ft is unexceptionable we need 6 ft. I feel that we also need plexiglass in our glass rooms by our desk, if the office staff can get 6 feet and plexiglass, why can't we. Also students need to wear mask, we will be exposed to every person in that students life and we will be putting our own family at risk!! Save us from the COVID 19, now! It's better to play it safe then be sorry later! How safe is your family! We need to protect the people we love or face the chance of losing them, and our own life is at stake.
Please do the right thing for the students, teachers, and staff of Hawaii. Please!!
Donna Montalvo-Teacher

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Jeffrey Uyeda <jeffrey.uyeda@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:29 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To our elected officials and to whom it may concern

I have a concern regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I know that for the economy to recover public schools must be reopened... I agree!!
What I disagree with is some of the "short cuts" being issued to start the school year... particularly the distance of student desks from one another!!

I am asking that the Board of Education follow CDC social distancing guidelines and MANDATE that ALL student desks be 6 ft apart OR MORE, if possible. Both my wife and I are public school teachers and we also have 2 young children... although we are afraid we are MORE THAN WILLING to go to work GIVEN THE PROPER SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES (not the BOE rules the CDC RULES).

Please strongly consider my testimony - for the safety of our keiki and staffing of Hawaii. If we are NOT careful with our guidelines and rules, schools will reopen only to be SHUT DOWN a second time (and distance learning will be the ONLY option) thus negatively affecting our Hawaii economy yet again.

Thank you for your time and for being our "voice,"
Jeffrey Uyeda
Pearl City High School
SPED PACE Work Study Teacher
307-5669

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Cindie McAnish <ohikiguys@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Cynthia McAnish and I work at Kea'au High School and my grandchildren attend Keonepoko Elementary. I am quite concerned over the reopening of schools, especially with confusion over the 6 foot space between people not being adhered to, as well as the proposal that masks aren't necessary.

If I must, I will retire and homeschool my grandchildren, if my family determines that it is unsafe for us to return to school in the foreseeable future. Please take the risk of a continued outbreak of COVID-19 very seriously for all of the parties involved.

Thank you,
Cynthia McAnish
Department Head, Special Education
Kea'au High School

Testimony

David Tanabe <dct@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is David Tanabe and I am a teacher who will begin teaching at Kaiser High School this academic year. My children attend Niu Valley Intermediate School.

It has been several days since the Department of Education released its health and safety guidance “Reopening Plan” (Version 1, July 2020), and specific language therein seems problematic and contradictory to other health guidelines announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, and language contained in the Memoradum of Understanding (MOU) dated June 26, 2020. Specifically the language of the Reopening Plan seems to allow or invite students to disregard directives to use a mask when social distancing of six feet is otherwise not feasible:

Masks should be worn when keeping six feet apart is not possible, or when children face each other and interact in similar ways. However, if students are sitting three feet apart, and facing the same way, wearing a mask is not required.

First, the timing of the release of the “Reopening Plan” within days of the MOU, appears irreconcilable with good faith negotiation. Was this “three feet” allowance negotiated by the Department in the days before the MOU? The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) has indicated that it was not.

Second, final discussions about school Instructional Models are being had this week at the CAS level, I understand. As a teacher, I do not know how many students I will need to see daily in my classroom; that has not yet been determined. I do not know how many student-peers my children will have to see in their classroom. While I understand that I may have some control over the physical layout of the chairs/desks for my students use, and that my children’s teachers will have similar controls over their classrooms, teachers have limited control over other conditions within the room as we manage adolescent behavior for class periods of 55 minutes or more.

I am concerned that as a teacher I will be exposed to infection at a higher risk than other employees of the State of Hawaii BECAUSE of the Department’s “three feet” allowance - even when other reasonable precautions are put into place like passively increasing air exchange rates (open doors and windows) within the classroom. Although I will instruct my children to wear their masks as consistently as possible, I am concerned that they will be exposed to infection from classmates who will be seated within three feet of them. I am concerned that infection will be spread virulently throughout these campuses BECAUSE of the Department’s “three feet” allowance. I am concerned that infection will be brought from the schools into my household. I am concerned for the short term and possibly fatal consequences of exposure. I am concerned for the long term health care consequences and risks to myself and my children.

I offer this testimony to request the Board to consider the decision-making of the Department, and to better (and more clearly) address teacher and student concerns for their lifetime of learning, health, and wellbeing.

With the light of knowledge, Malamalama.
Take care of ourselves, Malama Pono.

Sent from my iPad

Testimony

Bo Frank <radfordrams@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:41 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha this email serves as testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

The CDC recommends wearing masks and also a 6 feet distance when social distancing. I don't understand, actually I'm flabbergasted how the BOE is going against science and saying it is safe to be three feet apart and not wear a mask In classrooms when we re-open schools in the very near future. To be honest it is ludicrous to even consider on campus instruction like the virus has gone away. Our Covid-19 numbers are higher today than they were last semester when we shut down schools, yet we are now considering reopening and not following the protocol set by the CDC. I tell you what, if I get the virus from working as a teacher or my one of my children gets infected at school as a student you will be hearing from my lawyer, for not taking science seriously during a world wide pandemic!The CDC has safety protocol based on science for a reason! I am at a loss for words!!! It is unbelievable that student and teacher safety is not being considered here!

What has changed since we shut down schools and went online? Nothing really, except an increase in infections. We should still be online until the number of cases are at zero for two weeks like our original protocol stated!

Mahalo,

Bo Frank
Radford High Teacher
Parent of children at at Aliamanu Middle and Makalapa Elementary!
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on DOE plan for reopening

Mari Taira <maritaira@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

This email is written as a testimonial on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am a science teacher at Waikoloa Middle School and parent of a student at Waikoloa Elementary School. I am excited to see my students again in person and am looking forward to embracing a blended learning model to make it work. However, I am very concerned about the Superintendent's stance for spacing and masks in our classroom. I heard her say that students will not have to wear masks in the classroom and that they will be only 3 feet apart!

We must follow what science and our CDC is telling us works if we are to continue in-school learning this year: to maintain social distance and wear masks (especially when indoors). Otherwise, the virus will spread and our keiki will be taking it home to their families. I will be bringing it home to mine. My nephew lives with my mom (recovering from liver cancer) and I worry about her health and well-being. As a state, we need to do better for our youth, our families, and our future.

Respect the science and hold the Department of Education accountable to 6 feet spacing and masks in the classroom. Please protect our teachers, students, and community.

Sincerely,
Mari Souza

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet is not acceptable

IVY SAMOLINSKI <ivysamolinski@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
Please honor the guidelines set by the CDC of 6 feet to protect our students, faculty, and staff. We all deserve that!
Thank you,
Ivy Kraushaar
ELA Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony...Help!

Gavin Hashimoto <hashimoto59@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:47 PM

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I find it very concerning that social distancing guidelines are different only for schools. By changing the guidelines to accommodate the DOE to create plans that fit their needs is very disturbing. How can they believe that a classroom or "bubble" is safe enough not to wear masks and social distance? All the children come from different homes and are exposed to multiple people, so saying that they are like a family or a single "bubble" is ridiculous. I'm all for helping and teaching my students, but I have family that I have not spent time with because of COVID. I have been responsible in all my actions and plans to avoid possible situations in which I could be exposed. Only to find out that all my actions may have been for nothing because when I return to work, they have not put the same thought or care into their plans. I don't think it's fair to place teachers and students in situations where virus spread would be imminent. I have seen over the years colds and flus spread through schools like wild fire. Not all parents place their priority on what is the best for their child, we have all seen those parents who send their child sick with fever (temporarily hidden with Tylenol) or even worse. There are also parents who are not willing to pick up the sick child from school and expect the school to watch their child until it is convenient for them to come an get them. What procedures or mandates will schools have to make sure incidents like this don't occur? What guidelines or promises is the DOE going to give to eliminate this problem? It saddens me to hear the mayor making comments that contradict what the DOE is trying to implement. How is it okay for schools to implement 3 feet distancing when EVERYWHERE else is saying 6 feet. Kids may not seem to be passing it on to others kids as much, but they are still able to pass it to their parents, grandparents, teachers, and any other people that they may come in contact with. I would like to see all the state level DOE policy makers come to a classroom with 18 or more students and feel comfortable sitting in a room 3 feet apart with no one wearing masks. They have made it very clear that all the state wants to do is get people back to work and the economy started. They have placed their financial needs over the health and safety of all school staff and our students. As a special education teacher for over 12 years for the DOE, I have always put the needs of our students and their families first, but I will not risk my families life or health over my job. Please help us do what is right for our health and safety, not for our wallets.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ling S <jjddhi@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:48 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The DOE reopening policies and guides won't protect our keikis.

Schools should take students' temperature before they enter school. Not all parents are responsible and care for their kids. They would just send sick kids to schools. We can screen out some sick kids with temperature checking.

Kids should wear masks. If all kids wear masks, they protect teachers so teachers no need to wear masks. It's hard for teacher to teach with mask on. Also, wear masks protect students because the social distance is hard to maintain for them.

Account clerk for HDO district

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristina Lee <tinastarlee@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a teacher, a parent of a public school student, also a person with underlying health conditions, and a care giver for my parents. I teach at Moanalua Middle School. I have about 150 students each trimester. In my care over a year I will be in contact with 450 students. If we need to be 6 feet apart for the best safety everywhere else in our state, we should also be 6 feet apart at school. Students can definitely touch each other if one reaches out at 3 feet. Students are not stationary objects and we shouldn't expect them to be. Already it is stated that students "should" wear masks, and it cannot be required. Providing this 6 foot distance guideline will help everyone- student, families, teachers, everyone. Please increase the required spacing between people. If you are unwilling to agree to 6 foot spacing we should require masks.

Respectfully,
Kristina Lee

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Beth Tueller <Tueller50@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:48 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am Beth Tueller, 3rd grade teacher at Laie Elementary. I have a son going into 9th grade and a daughter going in to 12th grade at Kahuku High School.

Please commit to following the CDC guidelines of 6 feet between students. When there is broken glass on the playground, we don't shutter the playground, but we do make sure adults and children don't run on it barefoot. Following the guidelines will help students and teachers stay healthy so that schools can stay open. Parents will trust schools to safeguard their children.

I love the schedule we approved this morning at Laie Elementary. Children with the last name A-L will attend school in the morning. Children M-Z will attend in the afternoon. Having half the class at a time will allow us to space students 6 feet apart. Daily small class instruction will help our children who have missed a lot of social connection, learning, and predictability.

This will create a need for childcare, but let's first support families with safe, effective education. Most families will be able to find caregivers already in their ohana bubbles. Support can then be given to those who do not have friends and family to help, similar to the A+ program.

Sincerely,
Beth Tueller

Testimony

Wendy Salbedo <wsalbedo@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:52 PM

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Wendy Salbedo and I have been a teacher for over 20 years, servicing students on Maui County. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My first concern for the reopening of the school year is safety! I teach in kindergarten and the 3ft., ruling is dangerous and concerning. Children at a young age depend on teachers to keep them safe! I don't know how safe it'll be for five and six year olds, sitting within close distance of having someone cough and sneeze on them. This is normal in kindergarten, as they're still learning about the basic etiquette of covering their mouth.

I'm asking that the Board of Education change the social distancing from 3ft.,to 6ft.. Also, I'm a teacher that's over the age of fifty. I love my job and enjoy teaching students, but I'm concerned with the close proximity of having a 3ft, distance and becoming infected with COVID-19!

Mahalo,
Wendy Salbedo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kaleena Scoville <silaok@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kaleena Scoville. I am a 2nd grade teacher at Ewa Elementary and my son is a student at Mililani Mauka Elementary. I would like to please ask that the BOE require 6' distancing in the classroom. Being a teacher myself, I know that putting students 3' apart will be hazardous. Working with younger children (7-8 year olds), I've seen first hand how difficult it is for students to sit and look straight at the teacher all day. Think about when you were that age or any children that you know that are that age. It is impossible for a class of students (24 in my case) to not want to turn and talk to the person next to them. And what happens when they sneeze or cough and accidentally turn away from the front of the classroom? Teaching meaningful, engaging lessons requires a lot of discussion not only with the teacher but with fellow classmates. Discourse allows students to share ideas, get validation through feedback, work through challenging problems together, and learn from each other. Teachers could ask students to put their masks on every time they have to talk to someone. However, what happens when a student or students (which is more likely) are excited to share and turn and talk without following that direction. As a teacher, I can tell you that this will happen more often than you think.

I am not only concerned for myself and my students but for my son who will be in 3rd grade this year. The same issues will also affect him while he is in his classroom. My husband is also a teacher at Waikele Elementary and will be subject to the same issues.

In addition to my son, my husband and I have a 3 year old. I am extremely concerned about one of us contracting Covid-19 at school and bringing it home to her. The thought of her getting sick and (God forbid) being forced to stay in the hospital by herself literally keeps me awake at night and would be my worst nightmare. Can you imagine being 3 years old and being taken away from your family and everyone you love? Can you imagine being so scared and lonely because you can't be with your family and not having much social interaction at all due to nurses and doctors trying to limit their exposure to you? Thinking about the psychological issues that would cause brings me to tears.

If adults have been required to maintain 6' social distancing and to wear masks when in public, why is the requirement different when it comes to faculty, staff, and students in public schools? Those who contract the virus at school will go home and spread Covid-19 to their household members who will then spread it to those they work with or come in contact with outside their houses. It becomes a ripple effect and soon the concern of overwhelming our healthcare systems becomes a reality.

I implore you to put the safety of our community first and require 6' social distancing and wearing masks within the classroom.

Thank you for your time,
Kaleena Scoville

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet is unacceptable

Dustan Drexil <pedag0gical1@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it may concern
Three feet social distancing is unacceptable!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Chad Yamashiro <chad.yamashiro@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

3 feet side to side is not enough social distance. Students will talk to their neighbor face to face with less then 6 feet of distance.

Why is this even a discussion? From the start of this, 6 feet of distance has been the golden rule.

Chad yamashiro
Kapolei middle school

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony face coverings

darya ives <missdarya@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:05 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Honokaa High and Intermediate School. I am strongly in favor of asking students to at least wear some kind of face covering when coming back to school in the fall if they are going to be within 6 feet of others. Schools have the potential to be locations that spread disease and preserving student health mentally and physically is extremely important. I have been part of a summer school program that enforces 6ft between desks and face coverings. This are minor inconveniences in the classroom that greatly increase student feelings of safety in returning to school. I fear that not implementing safety robust safety protocols at schools may result in much lower attendance rates as well as higher possibility for infection.

Please consider 6ft social distancing and/or face coverings for students returning to school.

Many Thanks,
Darya Ives

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft social distancing

Leona Watson <lpwright@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
I am writing to Ask for your support in amending the spacing of 3ft of social distancing in class to CDC 6ft guidelines.
Although it will be a challenge I believe keeping our students safe as well as ourselves will provide a healthier climate.
Mahalo nui for your time and support!
Leona Watson

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Against 3 ft. social distance

Francine Takano- Yamabe <ftakanoyamabe@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I understand that education is important to our children, but I believe that it is unacceptable and irresponsible to allow for a 3 ft social distance vs the CDC recommended guidelines of 6 ft. Why would you jeopardize the health of the teachers and fellow students? I just visited the CDC website and see no changes to the 6 ft social distance guidelines.

Thank you for your time.

Francine Takano-Yamabe

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

"Testimony"

Mari Rose Magaoay <mari_rose.magaoay@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year". My name is Mari Rose Magaoay and I am speaking as both a parent and a teacher. I teach at Waipahu Intermediate School and my children attend August Ahrens Elementary school.

As a teacher, I am concerned about the 3 ft. distance DOE is proposing. 3 feet apart is putting our Keiki in jeopardy. Our middle school students are in the height of their emotions, and growing hormones. There's no way they'll not fidget, turn sideways, turn around, get restless, interact with other kids. 3 feet distance is absolutely dangerous.

In addition, I am also scared for my own health. I am 12 weeks pregnant and based from all my readings, pregnant women are at greater risk of getting sick of respiratory viruses than women who not pregnant. 3 ft distance will more likely increased the chance of contracting the virus. Therefore, 6 ft social distancing is highly recommended and mask need to not be optional rather required to wear at all times.

Lastly, as a parent, I am extremely scared for the health of my kids. I care for my children's' education but safety needs to be a top priority. I will not risk my children's life if the school will not ensure that it is a safe haven for students which includes sanitizing and disinfecting the whole school building, providing hand soaps, hand sanitizers and other disinfecting materials, wearing face cover at all times and practicing 6 ft social distancing.

Lastly, thank you to all our leaders for all the effort your during unprecedented times. I just hope our leaders will be more proactive on this matter and think of our children as our top priority, above all else.

Sincerely,
Mari Rose Magaoay

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Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 Feet Please

Alana Haitsuka <mrshaitsuka@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Please consider the health and well-being of both keiki, teachers, and staff by following CDC guidelines of 6 feet of separation. As a teacher, I want school to return to normal and I desperately miss the classroom, the students, and my colleagues. I also value life and cannot fathom the devastation the students and adults in our school community would feel at the loss of a single life, when it could have been avoided, by following sound medical and scientific judgment. As teachers, we encourage students to follow guidelines and science based information, so it is counter-intuitive to set up the very place where we teach students to be good citizens, in a way that goes against this advice.
Mahalo,
Alana Haitsuka-Fernandez

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Cara Fukuda <ctfukuda46@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Cara Fukuda and I work at Kalihi Kai Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 ft vs 6 ft

Cindy Kimoto <cskimoto@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

If the CDC indicates that people should keep at least 6 feet apart, why is the DOE indicating student desks can be 3 feet apart? Students will turn to the side even though they're supposed to be facing the same direction. They can easily, and will, turn their head to the right or left.

How can the DOE be in compliance with health standards when CDC is saying 6 feet? I can't understand the logic.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sean J <sjandoc86@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Sean Jandoc, I am a teacher at James B. Castle High School, and I would like to submit testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education‘s comprehensive plan for reopening school plan for the 2020-2021 School year.

In these uncertain times, to take unnecessary risks is dangerous to the health and safety of both us, the kumu and our haumāna. As kumu, part of our responsibilities is to provide a safe and healthy environment for our haumāna. How are we supposed to do that if we expose our haumāna to the potential risk of contracting the virus by being close to their neighbors?

CDC guidelines already recommend that people wear masks whether they are indoors or outside, and to physically distance themselves by 6 feet in ALL DIRECTIONS, not just front and back, so how is it ok for us to separate the haumāna by less than 6 feet left to right AND for them to not wear a mask? Classrooms on our campus are already small, and most classrooms statewide are just as small which makes it hard to separate the students safely. To add to that, some classes on campus and statewide have AC, which means that air will be circulating in an enclosed space, and even for the classes that do not have AC, air flow is not always a guarantee to carry any airborne spores out of the class. So again, how are we providing a safe and healthy environment for our haumāna if we say that they can sit closely next to each other without masks?

Our state has slowly been reopening with guidelines to help keep the number of COVID cases low, however in less than 2 months, the number of positive cases has nearly doubled. A lot of the cases are due to the fact that people did not practice social distancing, did not wear a mask, were a part of large gatherings whether it be at a funeral or someone‘s house, or it was a HOUSEHOLD CLUSTER. A lot of families in Hawai‘i, especially in Kāne‘ohe, share multi-family/multi-generational homes, so if a haumāna is part of an infected family cluster, how many of their kumu or fellow haumāna could they possibly infect before they provide a positive test and let the school know?

I live in a multi-generational home, and I am also a father of 3, all of whom are set to return to school next month. My children are 3, 5, and 7; how are they supposed to keep to themselves when they are in class with their friends? I always try to encourage social and physical distancing with them, but how do I know that their friends will have the same practice? I do not feel comfortable sending my children back to school if these guidelines are upheld. Also, I would not feel comfortable returning home from work, knowing that I could have unknowingly contracted the disease, and could possibly infect my wife, my children, and my parents.

Mahalo for your time, I hope that a true agreement can be reached that will benefit all kumu and haumāna.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Alana Haitsuka <mrshaitsuka@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:22 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Dept. of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-21 School Year.
My name is Alana Haitsuka-Fernandez, and I am a teacher at Honoka`a High and Intermediate School
Aloha,
Please consider the health and well-being of both keiki, teachers, and staff by following CDC guidelines of 6 feet of separation. As a teacher, I want school to return to normal and I desperately miss the classroom, the students, and my colleagues. I also value life and cannot fathom the devastation the students and adults in our school community would feel at the loss of a single person, when it could have been avoided, by following sound medical and scientific judgment. As teachers, we encourage students to follow guidelines and science based information, so it is counter-intuitive to set up the very place where we teach students to be informed and safe in a way that actually goes against the wisdom provided to protect people from Covid.
Mahalo,
Alana Haitsuka-Fernandez

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Alette Yoshii-Ho <ayoshiiho@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As both a teacher and a parent of a child in the public school system, I cannot understand why our schools are the exception to CDC recommendations and government public health mandates. The CDC guidelines recommend social distancing of at least six feet between individuals and the use of face masks, especially indoors. Yet this mandate doesn't seem to apply to our school children or their teachers in the classroom. Social distancing of three feet and no face masks are being advocated by the DOH and the DOE, setting other priorities above safety and health.

The fact is, there is nothing more important than safety and health, especially when it comes to education. Safety and health MUST be priorities, especially during this crisis, in which the consequence can be severe, long-lasting illness or even death. The cost of even one child or one DOE employee succumbing to the coronavirus because we did not do everything we could to protect safety and lives is unimaginable; it is too much to risk.

The stakes have never been higher; there is no room for mistakes. Please help us in advocating for the health and safety of teachers and the children of Hawaii by mandating six feet social distancing and the use of face masks in our classrooms. Not only will our guidelines then be aligned with government mandates, but we will be able to set examples for our keiki so they know to follow these mandates outside their classrooms, helping to keep our communities safe.

Alette Yoshii-Ho
Farrington High School Teacher
Parent of a Moanalua High School student

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Britney Carey <britneyrcarey@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Britney Carey. I am a teacher at Kalaniana‘ole Elementary and Intermediate School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am asking that the Board mandate that classrooms be configured with at least six feet between student desks.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools “space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible” to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. The CDC characterizes students who are “not spaced apart” as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. The three-foot spacing policy the Hawai’i Department of Education has listed in their reopening plan is inadequate, misguided, and downright dangerous.

Please mandate that the DOE uphold what was agreed upon in the memorandum of understanding with HSTA, namely that “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by “maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds.”

In addition to being a teacher, I am the mother of a young child. I am terrified by the reports of multi-system inflammatory syndrome found in young children who have contracted COVID-19. Six-foot spacing in my classroom will help lower my risk of bringing this disease home to my daughter.

The phrases “where possible” and “where feasible” are being used frequently in guidance from various government organizations, including the DOE. Six-feet distancing is not only possible and feasible in our schools, it is undeniably vital to giving students, staff, and families the best chance at staying healthy during this pandemic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Britney Carey

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3ft vs 6ft

Holly Nakamoto <hsnaka13@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please keep our Keiki safe and stick to the agreement of 6 ft distance. Is a child's health really worth the risk just so we can get more kids into a classroom? No, it isn't. Thank you for putting our children first.

Holly Nakamoto
Kindergarten teacher
Konawaena Elementary
Hawaii Island

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation of DOE's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening of Schools for School Year 2020-2021

Delia Ishibashi <deliaishibashi@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

When this coming school year opens, I will begin my 39th year of teaching on the island of Kauai. I love my job and look forward each year to the new bunch of students who will be on my team.

I am very disappointed and upset that the State DOE and Dr. Kishimoto will not follow the six feet social distancing that the CDC recommends. Instead, three feet distancing will be acceptable. Who made that decision and how can one defend that it is acceptable in a classroom? How can they put students' and teachers' lives at risk? Along with that is the fact that the language in the Memorandum of Understanding uses the word "should" rather than "will" or "shall" when it comes to wearing a mask. We know wearing a mask is highly recommended by the health experts.

The teachers are the ones in the trenches each day working with students. We want to be assured that we will be safe when we return to school in a few weeks.
I am disheartened that the state DOE and
Dr. Kishimoto would put our lives and the lives of our students and our families at risk.

Thank you,
Delia Ishibashi
Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School
Kauai District

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please reconsider 3 feet distancing

Mel O <melmobayashi@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns about DOE's proposal. The purpose is to not go on a rant but to explain reasons why 3 feet distancing will cause greater damage to Hawaii Public Schools.

Teachers are all eager to start the new school year but proper guidelines for the health and safety of students and teachers still needs to be considered.

I am a dedicated teacher and have been teaching for over ten years. I love working with students. However, with this current situation and now, with the increase in covid cases, it is imperative to not have schools distance only 3 feet. It will cause higher increase in covid cases and another abrupt shut down in schools.

I'm hopeful with Dr. Fauci saying there will be a vaccine available late this year or early next year. So for the time being, students and teachers need to be distanced 6 feet apart. CDC guidelines has repeatedly stated 6 feet apart and to wear masks. Where did the directive come from that 3 feet was an acceptable distance for young students?

Let's be real, students will not want to wear masks all day. I work in a classroom with no AC, mosquitos that eat us alive, and August through December are the hottest months in the school year. So realistically, it will be dangerous and risky to assume that students will abide to these guidelines.

And honestly for me, I would rather teach students face to face than distance learning. However, with the steady increase in covid cases, it is best to do the hybrid model or split the classes into smaller groups.

Let's get creative to help alleviate the stress of parents having to find child care. If schools have extra classrooms, use extra curricular teachers (SEL, PE, music, performing arts, computer science, and etc.) for the days that students will not be in the classroom. Bring the non classroom teachers (EL , curriculum, Title 1 coordinators, resource teachers, and etc.) who are qualified to teach back in the classroom. These teachers could help teach art, monitor students on i-Ready, reading fluency, independent reading time, or study hall. We must find out of the box ideas. It's all hands on deck during this time.

Please have DOE reconsider the 3 feet distancing and 20 + students in the classroom to 6 feet distancing with smaller groups of students. I realize Covid will never go away but while we wait for a vaccine, we must protect our families. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,
Melissa Obayashi

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nicole <kuehu8@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I Nicole Hubin am writing to you today as a concerned parent of Salt Lake Elementary Students. I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Its ridiculous to allow 3-foot distancing in classroom, it should be MANDATORY 6 feet. Everywhere you go you are mandated to be 6 feet apart from people for example hospitals (where I work), grocery stores, restaurants etc. Why put our keiki at risk? Its ludicrous and dangerous, and puts our keiki, their families and our teachers at risk.

In closing I ask that you change your mandatory 3-foot distancing to the mandatory 6 feet distancing. If everyone in Hawaii has to do it there should be no exceptions when it comes to our children. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Hubin

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Irene Kendig <ikendig4@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Irene Kendig-Sullivan and I am a teacher at Roosevelt High School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.
My wife and I are expecting our first child who will be born in October. We are thrilled and terrified.. partly for normal parenting reasons but also at the thought of my level of exposure to hundreds of students come this fall, who are not required to be 6ft apart if seated next to each nor required to wear a mask, nor have temperatures checked. This level of exposure to our teachers and students will harm the entire state. This is not a plan that reduces risk to us and is unacceptable, especially to those of us that go home to family members that have compromised or developing immune systems. I am not okay with the current plan, I am not okay with risking the health of my wife or our newborn son come October. Under this plan I would have to quarantine myself from my own family, which is not something I'm willing to do.
This pandemic is not going away until we take it seriously. Teachers or children should not be forced into rooms in groups to expose each other with COVID and take it home to spread. Please consider our health and value it more than putting parents back to work. Teachers are not just the babysitters of the workforce, we are not willing to sacrifice our health and safety so the economy can rise. We must deal with the pandemic first, and take truly health conscious steps towards providing an education to our youth.

Please value the lives of your community members.

Irene Kendig-Sullivan

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Geri Fernandez <fernandezgeri@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,
I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am a resource teacher, I have been a classroom teacher the previous 12 years. I disagree with the three feet apart order. I know there is no “right” way to address this as classrooms are small, over filled with students and hot; no real ventilation. I know 6 feet apart is not possible. So What can be done? More virtual learning? Can we lend each student a laptop/ iPad? Can we collect them biweekly for maintenance? For those students who are on free lunch, can they be the students who are physically in school and the rest virtual learners? But is that fair?

Can we use tents and make outside classrooms more accessible? Can we rotate inside and outside classes? Most schools on the outer islands have no AC anyway.

Three feet apart will do nothing but spread covid-19 further. I understand and appreciate the attempt but it’s just not safe.

Unfortunately I have no solution. I wish I did. It’s an ugly situation and everyone will have to step up- students, parents, teachers, whole communities.

Thank you for your time

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Julia Guerreo <juliagulia504@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am a concerned parent that is not in favor of re-opening our schools due to the safety of my daughters entering the 2nd grade & 9th grade. I am not for risking their lives while you “assess” the situation. How do you expect to make sure they are following the guidelines like social distancing(3 feet, which is a joke Because of CDC guidelines Are 6ft), sanitizing(DOE can’t even provide Clorox wipes on a normal school year & it’s parents and teachers buying it), and facing forward?(how do you expect any age group to do that all day without talking to one another)Are you planning on hiring more staff? We don’t already have enough staff As it is during a normal school year that can help meet the needs of all Our children. Are you planning on hiring more janitors that can make sure the restrooms and common areas are constantly being cleaned& sanitized?How are you planning on enforcing rules on the bus? More staff because we know the driver won’t be able to. Are you planning on making the teachers enforce the rules in their classrooms because they have enough on their plate already.What about the temperature checks for everyone daily? Strict guidelines on coming to school sick. Not allowing any child to even come school with a sniffle or if they have a household member sick at home to stay home as well! Before re-opening our schools you better makes SURE your plan WILL keep our kids safe from harms way and you got all your T’s crossed and your I’s dotted.I know we are far from that right now.I am in favor for Distance learning for at least the 1st quarter of school.So you can “assess” the situation without putting my children’s lives at risk. They are not lab rats that you can test your Theory or do trial and error. At least I will know my children are safe & not bringing home any virus that will not only put their lives at risk but their siblings at risk who are a newborn and 1 year old. I AM IN FAVOR OF DISTANCE LEARNING UNTIL YOU CAN ENSURE MY CHILDRENS SAFETY! We are not to the point of re-opening our schools. Please, please, please Keep our schools closed!

Thank you for your time,
Julia Guerrero
Moloka’i District
Kaunakakai school-2nd grader
Moloka’i high school- 9th grader

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Amber Tai Hook <a.taihook@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Amber Kamailelauli‘i Tai Hook, a Hawaiian immersion kindergarten teacher at Hau‘ula Elementary school. I have three of five children left in school. One attends Hau‘ula Elementary where I work, another is going into 8th grade at Kamehameha Schools, and a junior attends Kahuku High School.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I DO NOT agree with the new guidelines coming down for us as teachers. If we happen to get COVID or any sickness with less strict guidelines other than the 6ft recommendation, you will be in a more dire situation. By law, we would have to take sick until we get better thus leaving our children with unequipped substitutes for long periods of time affecting the child‘s EDUCATION. If you care about the true EDUCATION of Hawai‘i‘s keiki, you will have care and concern for their kumu/teachers to stick to the recommendations so we can try to provide QUALITY education in an already stressful situation.

I urge you to show the respect teachers deserve by considering the health of every single teacher and educator that make TRUE EDUCATION possible. Please don‘t take our work lightly so that you can squeeze a few more, potentially sick children into our classrooms. We are already putting our lives and the lives of our families at risk to provide this service of public education. Shouldn‘t our lives matter? THREE FEET IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Thank you,

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 feet distancing at schools

augustwest <augustwest9999@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher and I strongly disagree with 6 foot distancing. We have robbed these children enough. They deserve a good education and deserve to get back to school as quickly and as close to normal as possible. They have already lost a full quarter of school and it looks like they will lose more. I am total disgusted with how things are being handled by the government.

I agree with 3 feet and preferably less for children in school.

Thank you
George scondras

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Richard Franco <richard.franco@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

If desks aren't 6 feet apart, I'm afraid I'll have to seek employment elsewhere. At my age, I'm more at risk, and I refuse to die because of my job. Sorry. I DO love what I do.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:06 PM

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Dr. Angie Miyashiro and I teach at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary School.
The recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and our agreed language with the DOE states that: “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.”
I want to advocate for all teachers, staff and the students, especially when 30 to 40 percent of our staff are in high-risk categories to honor the 6 foot distancing and not allow the DOE to change the distancing to only 3 feet.
I am advocating for social and physical distancing that avoids the very real possibility of having to close all schools. For the health and safety of our keiki and our fellow teachers, I am asking every you to please ensure that all health and safety rules are followed including the 6 foot distancing.
Sincerely, Dr. Angie Miyashiro

Testimony

malia r <maliasphone@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:08 PM

July 6, 2020

Dear Madam Chair Catherine Payne & Members of the Board,

My name is Maria Bernard-Reantaso, and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a veteran teacher at Moanalua High School. I am against the 3 feet social distancing allowance when students are all facing in the same direction and without any face coverings. First, this allowance was not agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding between HSTA, BOE, and the State of Hawai'i that was settled on June 27, 2020. This lax movement does not make sense to the increased number of current COVID19 cases which are more a result of community spread now. It endangers my life and my students' lives as well as our loved ones at home. For me, I live with 3 kupuna ages 70, 75, and 77, and my obese husband. We all have pre-existing medical conditions: aortic aneurysm, diabetes, asthma, & hypertension. Finally, we need to use the latest information to determine what is best for reopening schools. Just today on July 6, CDC has updated their information on social distancing, which there is no mentioning that 3 feet of social distancing without face covering may be a possibility. Just today Lt. Governor Josh Green urged the public to wear a mask and that this is better than being on a ventilator. He was also adamant that we "refrain from decreasing social distancing". Just today, Hawai'i Department of Health Director Dr. Bruce Anderson stated there were 78 reported new cases over the 4th of July weekend. Dr. Anderson reiterated that we must be "more vigilant" in wearing face coverings, keep a "6 feet" of physical distance, along with washing hands regularly & staying home when sick. These practices will "prevent the disease from circulating". If our own local leaders, who are also health experts, are advocating the public to wear face coverings and to maintain the "6 feet" of social distancing, then we should follow their advice. For all these reasons, we must do away with allowing 3 feet social distancing & the option of not using face coverings.

Thank you,
Maria Bernard-Reantaso
Moanalua High School Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lihau Kaapuni <lihaukaapuni@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Name: Lihau Kaapuni
School Children Attend: 1
Educator Workplace: Kilohana Elementary School

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk.** The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Mahalo for your continued support and attention to this matter. Please help us provide an environment that ensures all of our keiki and kumu stay safe and healthy.

Aloha,
Lihau Kaapuni

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Rachel Tokunaga <rachel.tokunaga@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Rachel Tokunaga and I am a teacher at Palolo Elementary School. I am very concerned for the safety and health of my students, colleagues, and family. Seating only three feet apart without masks is irresponsible and unacceptable. Elementary aged students will have difficulty facing forward at all times, not visiting their classmates, and covering their mouths when they cough or sneeze.

I have a toddler, elderly parents, and I am expecting. I have been teaching in the DOE for 12 years but I am seriously considering leaving for a private school where health and safety is a priority. Please reconsider what is being presented.

Thank you,
Rachel Tokunaga

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 ft

Andrews Family <andrewsfamily@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We are disposable…SAD…

Virus-free. www.avast.com

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony in support of 6 foot distancing in schools

Karen Poepoe <kpoepoe2@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Subject: VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Karen Poepoe, I am a teacher at Kualapu'u Elementary School on Moloka'i. Please respect the advice of the CDC pertaining to the 6 feet of distance recommended to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. I do not support the 3 foot distance. It is not enough to make me feel safe.
Mahalo,
Karen Poepoe

Testimony

Lauryn Hirano <laurynj44@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:48 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lauryn Castro and I am an educator at Kea'au Elementary School and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I believe that it is putting teachers, students and their family members at risk if we do not follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet of distancing, as well as adhering to the CDC's mask guidelines. This is not what we agreed upon and this endangers our entire community.

I am a young mother of 3 girls. I am not only concerned for my students and colleagues, but I am also concerned for the safety of myself. Who is going to take care of my girls if I get sick? These past 5 months, I have taken the precautions of only going to the store when needed. I wear gloves and a mask. My kids have been safely "stuck" at home. I take these extreme measures to keep my family safe and healthy. But if I am asked to teach, I will in with any guidelines given. But.....it will be a shame if the same serious precautions are taken in our schools, being that as a parent I have been responsible all this time.

I expect that when I come to school, my health and safety is also of value. I want to teach my third grade students, I want to see them everyday, and I want this all to go away. I want our normal school year back. As a parent and a teacher, our hearts are in the right place, but safety comes first. Safety for everyone on campus. If a teacher gets sick, who is going to take their place? Someone certified? Probably a substitute, not a highly qualified teacher. These are things that I hope will be considered.

Thank you for your time in reading this,

Lauryn Castro

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

jeaninedot78@gmail.com <jeaninedot78@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jeanine Dotario, I am a third grade teacher at Wilcox Elementary School.

I have a daughter that will be in the 10th grade this school year. I am not comfortable sending her to school without the 6 feet social distancing in place. I would love for her to return to school and interact with her peers after such a long break from school. Without having to wear a face mask and by reducing the spacing between desks in the classroom I am very hesitant to have her return to face to face school.

As a teacher, I do not want to put my health or the health of my students at risk because you want to now change the distance between students from 6 feet to 3 feet. Let's be proactive now so we are not faced with future problems. Let's make the reopening of school safe for everyone.

Thank you
Jeanine Dotario
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY from teacher of 15 years

Sarah Akemann <sarahakemann410@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Ed,
I was shocked when I read your recent guidelines, and frankly, I am scared. I'm also extremely scared for my colleagues who are vulnerable and the students with vulnerable family members.

I'm also confused over how these guidelines were created, as every medical professional I have spoken with says they are reckless guidelines.

You are putting us in danger so that the system runs more smoothly. This will backfire in every possible way.

You agreed not to put us in dangerous situations. This is dangerous. Please reconsider.

Sarah Akemann
15 year Hawaii teacher

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lorey Ishihara <lorey.ishihara@k12.hi.us> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 4:31 PM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

I am a high school teacher who is very concerned about the health and safety of my students as well as myself regarding the social distancing in the classroom.
The three feet distancing is not a viable option. We need to follow the six feet distance as a minimal safety precaution. Students do not sit still and face forward during class time. They never have. It is unrealistic to think that this will occur. Therefore, the six feet distance is safer until the Covid 19 vaccine can be disseminated.

The classroom is already a hot spot for germs. With the heat during the opening of the school year, it is horrendous with no outside air coming through, fans circulating warm air, and students sweating in their seats. There will be movement in the room.

Many students in Hawaii carry puffers to alleviate chronic asthma conditions.
These students do not stand a chance being in a viral ridden classroom. Hawaii has high cases of child diabetes too. We really need safe guidelines in the classroom that will remain standard for the health and safety of all our keiki and our teachers. No one should become a "sacrificial lamb" to Covid 19.

Education cannot be business as usual. We need the highest safety guidelines in place. I humbly request your earnest consideration of this matter as we prepare to enter our classrooms across the state.

Thank you for your time, effort, and grave consideration.

Sincerely,

Lorey Ishihara
Kahuku HIgh & Intermediate
56-490 Kamehameha Hwy.
Kahuku, HI. 96731
Cell: (808) 389-5545

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****

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Restart school during COVID

lenore inn <lenoreinn@msn.com> Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please ensure the safety of our students, teachers, and community by adhering to c.d.c guidelines of social distancing in the classrooms. Six feet social distancing must be mandated. Allowing distancing of only 3 feet for grades k-2 and expecting learning to occur In classrooms with temperature approaching greater than 90 degrees without air conditioning, and wearing masks is pure negligence.

Sent from my iPad

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening of the school year

anita liwai <808aliwai@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 11:58 AM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Anita Silva, I have been a public school teacher for 16 years. I am very concerned about the plan to allow students to sit 3 feet apart rather than the 6 feet recommended by the CDC.

I am an elective teacher and have a very large number of students enrolled in my classes. Typically the number is more than 30. The plan at my school is to divide students into groups based on last names and the groups will attend school 2 days a week. After looking at my class rosters depending on the alphabetical division I might have 17 in my classroom at a time. This is too many students sitting together too closely! I am worried about my safety and the safety of my students.
Thank you
Anita Silva
808aliwai@gmail.com

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY for Comprehensive plan for reopening of schools '20-'21 SY

Doreen Stone <dolini@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 5:19 PM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Doreen Stone. I teach 4th grade at King Kaumuali'i Elementary School on Kauai. This will be my 13th year teaching and I also received my NBCT qualification in 2018. I am writing today to address the plan released by Superintendent Kishimoto.

Some issues I am concerned about are as follows:

1. Mandating of masks
2. Screening of students
3. 3' of distance versus the 6' distance agreed upon with HSTA.
4. The proposed action should a student or staff member test positive for Covid-19

Masks should be required indoors by everyone on campus to help prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, although some students may be asymptomatic, why aren't students going to be screened for temperature checks? As a teacher, I am expected to "visually" ascertain whether a student is sick? What is especially disturbing is the public is being told to keep a 6' distance in stores and businesses, yet students and staff only need 3' for the entire day indoors together? What science was used to arrive at this justification? What if a student(s) or staff test positive for the virus? Yes, a health clearance is needed before returning to school, however, what about the possible exposure to Covid-19 of a large number of students and staff in that period of time? What protections at that point should be in place for students and staff? Are we expected to put our lives at risk everyday?

I am a "high risk" teacher. I am particularly concerned that as Hawaii opens up to allow tourists to visit, the virus will be brought in at a much greater rate, and eventually come into our communities and the classrooms. I am nervous going back to work, as I am concerned about the possibility of death. I have considered applying for a disability placement upon hearing the news of what seems to be a hastily ill-planned announcement. I am considering this until a vaccine is developed. I know there are no easy answers, but I expect our health concerns to be at the forefront of our discussions, as it can result in long term health effects, or death for some of us.

Thank you,
Doreen Stone
General Ed. / Inclusion Teacher
King Kaumuali'i Elementary

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Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 FEET APART PLEASE!

Kacy Sumikawa <ksumikawa@kalanihs.org> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 6:02 PM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!
I am a counselor at Kalani High School and am very concerned with today's **Honolulu Star-Advertiser's** article about schools reopening with student desks THREE feet apart and not SIX, as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed on June 26, 2020 by Dr. Kishimoto and HSTA President Corey Rosenlee.

For the safety of tens of thousands of public school students and their families, faculty and staff and their families, please please require students be SIX feet apart, and not THREE.

Thank you for all you do!

Kacy Sumikawa, Counselor

Kalani High School

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

A Robinson <auj_iam@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 10:13 PM
To: "BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE Hawaii,

Please, please, please put our children and teachers first. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): “Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

Three (3) feet between students and teachers is not accaptable in all other situations during this pandemic, so why is the BOE even thinking of laxing and neglecting the health and safety of our children and their teachers, who have been so wonderful with distance learning during the last quarter of this past school year.

My name is Audra Robinson and my two sons attend Lihiliho Elementary School. Even at my workplace Federal Government, they are putting plans in place to have employees at least 6 feet apart. I whole heartedly believe our children and teachers deserve so much better.

Are the BOE employees sitting 3 feet apart at their workplace?

Thank you in advance for seriously rethinking about making 6 feet clear as a minimum for our children and teachers, they are precious to us.

Sincerely,
Audra Robinson

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMO!NY!

Kehaulani Ernestburg <kehaulani61@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:38 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education:

I am Testifying on Discussion ITEM VI (A):
"Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year!

I am AGAINST your proposed actions to OPEN school:
1) Allowing 3-Foot distancing in c classrooms !! Dangerous!
THIS PUTS THE STUDENT,TEACHERS LIVES AT-RISK!
I AM AGAINST THIS! STOP IMMEDIATELY! MY LIVE IS TO PRECIOUS TO
RISK IT!

FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES AND STOP INVENTING SOME RISKY, NON-SENSE BEHAVIOR!

Sincerely yours,

Leialoha G. Mataalii
Kahuku High & Intermediate School
Substitute Teacher!

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Social distancing

Miriam Ortiz-Gouveia <svhawaii@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:44 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

No this won’t work for our Keiki and staff! 3 ft is not acceptable!!

Miriam Ortiz-Gouveia

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY!

Lincoln Mataalii <lmataalii71@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:45 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Testifying on Discussion ITEM VI (A):
"Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year!

I am AGAINST your proposed actions to OPEN school:
1) Allowing 3-Foot distancing in classrooms !! Dangerous!
THIS PUTS THE STUDENT and TEACHERS LIVES AT-RISK!

STOP IMMEDIATELY!

FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES AND STOP INVENTING SOME RISKY, NON-SENSE BEHAVIOR!

Sincerely yours,

Lincoln Mataalii
Kahuku High School, Alumni

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY!

William Ernestburg <wernestburg35@gmail.com>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 9:50 AM

Aloha Board of Education:

I am Testifying on Discussion ITEM VI (A):
"Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year!

I am AGAINST your proposed actions to OPEN school:
1) Allowing 3-Foot distancing in c classrooms !! Dangerous!
THIS PUTS THE STUDENT and TEACHERS LIVES AT-RISK!
STOP IMMEDIATELY!

FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES AND STOP INVENTING SOME RISKY, NON-SENSE BEHAVIOR!

Sincerely yours,

William Ernestburg, Grandparent
Kahuku High & Intermediate School
Hauula Elementary School
Laie Elementary School

TESTIMONY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

From Jim Shon

July 9, 2020

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

Re: VI. A. Presentation on Department of Education's (DOE) comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

RE: SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS, Process, Communication, Voices and Input from All Stakeholders

A MODEST PROPOSAL: That the Board of Education require each school's reopening plan be shared with their School Community Council and, to the extent possible, respect and reflect their input.

JUSTIFICATION.

In our Democracy, we not only select Executives, with concentrated power, we also elect or select a wide variety empowered and advisory groups. Of course, this complicates decision making, slows it down, and leads to compromise. We have a Board of Education, a Board of Regents, A Board of Land and Natural Resources, a Land Use Commission, County Councils, and Neighborhood Boards. Unlike stand alone executives, it is through these groups that we apply our Sunshine law ensuring public observation and participation.

Why do we do this? Presumably because we recognize that a group of knowledgeable, committed and qualified citizens brings to the table diverse perspectives, ideas, stakeholder interests, and collective dialogue. The very process of public input, deliberation, exchange of ideas, refinement of policies and strategies, hopefully, results in a more thoughtful and effective governance.

Who among us would dispense with the Board of Education, or Regents, or County Councils? For Charter Schools, governance is delivered through an empowered school board, which deals with budgets, curricula, collective bargaining, facilities, and the selection of a school principal. There is no evidence that these boards are unsuccessful. In fact, with fewer resources, and virtually no

facility money, these boards have been creative and effective to allow charter schools to grow in number. Many outperform our department schools.

And yet, for our Department, stakeholder roles are compartmentalized. Below the deliberation of the Board of Education, each element of the "system" operates somewhat separately. Principals decide on the reopening plan. Teachers negotiate or petition the BOE for changes. Parents are waiting to be told what has already been decided. The voices of the community and students have not been part of the formal process.

The School Community Councils, although advisory, are sitting and waiting to be utilized to bring multiple perspectives and ideas and feedback to school plans. It is true, some of the SCCs are more effective and more engaged that others. Some are ignored. Many are frustrated. This is also the case of every appointed or elected board. Some are good, some not so good. Most advisory Neighborhood Boards are deeply engaged in City and County issues, and are attended by a wide range of agencies and elected officials. Their approval or rejection of a proposal has had real consequences.

The SCC is, however, the only collective DOE school level arena where most of the major stakeholders gather to engage in a meaningful dialogue to assist school leaders in important decisions.

To require involvement of the SCCs does not imply that the Board will grant them final decision making power. It implies that the difficult task of creating, documenting, evaluating, and tweaking the school reopening plan need not fall on one person's shoulders. It need not be limited to our narrow silos of role models. A healthy discussion that increases the voices and participation of key stakeholders may be valuable.

Should the Board direct principals to engage with the SCCs, it will naturally create discomfort for traditional centers of power. Nevertheless, it may be a good time to facilitate the maturity and values of each school's SCC.

Mahalo for your willingness to meet the challenges of this difficult time.

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Cheryl Mckee <cherylmckee2014@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 4, 2020 at 3:00 PM
To: BOE.HAWAII@boe.hawaii.gov

School should stick to the 6 feet social distancing. It is not fair to change to 3 feet apart. Its bad enough schools want to reopen and new cases are on the rise everyday and the deaths are on the rise too. Children and older adults are most vulnerable. I have 3 children attending 3 different schools. It is just not fair.

Reopening of Hawaii Schools

Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 11:13 AM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a secondary teacher, I am surprised and disappointed by the public statements being released to local news media regarding the 3-foot distancing of students upon returning to school this Fall. It is premature to even be discussing any return to school at this time especially with the rapid rise in cases in just the last 14 days. The problems are compounded by the governor's plan to reopen tourism soon AND the approaching flu season which is just weeks away. I feel, the board and the department of Education are being grossly negligent in risking our entire community, especially our children and grandchildren just because we're all feeling cooped up. We are being too hasty and should not be putting our kids at risk as well as our teachers, staff and administrators especially when states don't even have adequate access to conduct mass testing.

I don't understand the board and department of Education's adversity to distance learning in the Fall and implore you to rethink your position regarding that option. Yes, attendance was low last Spring, but remember, the DOE made a public statement that students grades for the fourth quarter were purely enrichment and that they would not be graded during quarter four. Students called and messaged me immediately after the press release to confirm what they had heard. If they were satisfied with their third quarter marks, I didn't hear from them again (I teach Juniors and Seniors). These kinds of statements had a direct effect on attendance data and should not be taken into account. We were in transition for the last six weeks. According to the CDC guidelines for reopening schools, distance learning is the number one option when it comes to safety. Given the rise in cases we've been seeing nationwide, I beg the board and department of Education to reconsider your plans to reopen in August that include bringing students on campus which is just a few short weeks away. Many, many parents are deeply concerned. Perhaps the hybrid and blended rotation models could be implemented in the Spring after more reliable testing and a vaccine is available. Oxford University is confident that they are getting very close to a reliable vaccine that could be released in October. It's like putting the cart before the horse right now.

My friends in the private sector have already been notified by their companies that they will be doing tele-work until January. Yes, January. Imagine the ramifications if we bring students back in the midst of rising cases, the reopening of tourism in Hawaii, and flu season. Schools should give teachers the option to tele-teach and getting teachers who need it, the training they'll need to be successful. I understand SPED concerns and teachers would be able to manage their small classes using the models presented. I don't see how we could implement those plans in a regular ed classroom. Distance learning, for now, would be more economically feasible because there are just too many "unknowns" that could exacerbate the current situation, quickly. We already know we have community spread. Don't risk the safety of our families. We can work out the details of hybrid or blended rotation models as more reliable, mass testing becomes available, a vaccine is released and we REALLY see a meaningful decrease and stabilization in cases. Kauai is the perfect example. What looked like success early on, evolved into elevated numbers in cases as they opened up. It's too soon. Please reconsider and see where we stand in November or December.

Elizabeth Benson

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

Lawrence Ortiz <lawrence.k.ortiz@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:46 AM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Do not return to school but if so make it 6ft apart not 3ft

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Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

sheallene alo <asheallene@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:52 PM
To: BOE.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

My biggest worry is that 3ft. Social distancing with students in the elementary school will still be dangerous because if one kid gets it , I can just imagine how quickly it could spread through out the elementary school . It's just something I'm not willing to risk with my children's lives.

Mahalo for your concerns
Sheallene Alo
8984576400

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

School opening testimonial

David Perreira <david.perreira@campbell.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 1:47 PM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello,
I am a teacher/counselor at Campbell high school. I am really concerned about the 3 ft distancing and students option to not wear a mask while in class. I feel that is extremely dangerous for our students teachers and staff.

I recently took a trip to Maui, and While riding on a plane you must wear your mask the entire trip except to Eat our drink. I felt safer flying to the neighbor island, than I do going back to school. With the number of cases raising daily and at all time highs in Hawaii, I don't see how the DOE/BOE, can't see that they are putting us all at high risk Of exposure.

If the city is telling us that masks are to be worn indoors at all times, why is it that it's not the same for our schools?

I have been teaching summer school PE on line and have had a 98% attendance rate. With all students participating. Yes, it has its set backs but student's are safe, engaged and are learning.

I feel teachers, as well as students should have an option to attend school physically or virtually. I live with family members who are at a higher risk of becoming fatally sick if exposed to covid-19.

I don't think the plan made by our leaders is the safest way to go about returning to school. Especially the same week we open up tourism and out of state travel. I strongly feel the negatives out weigh the positives with the plan you all are trying to push forward.

Please reconsider opening dates and guidelines that currently being pushed forward,

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re-opening Of Schools Safely

Laura Paet-Tamboa <chisaiichi@aol.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:56 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing to express my concern that the DOE & DOH is allowing the principals/schools to set their own guidelines instead of all schools having the same guidelines to re-open safely. I would like to stress that each school make it mandatory for all staff and students to wear a masks as we know this helps to stop the spread. If we do not make mask wearing mandatory than students will take it back to parents and our Kapuna (our most vulnerable).

I would also express my concern about not performing temperature checks by school staff. This can be trained right now by the school nurse. For many businesses, even at my work place, we take our temperatures and our employees to keep everyone safe and we do not have medical degrees. If PPE is an issue for schools, I would like to recommend the DOE have a statewide drive for PPE, hand sanitizers, wipes, soap, and thermometers. Time is of the essence to keep all our Keiki safe, physically and mentally. We should not be satisfied with the status quo, it's time the DOE & DOH step up. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,
Concern Parent at Keoneula Elementary

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

joyadomari04@yahoo.com <joyadomari04@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 4:38 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I really dont agree with this decision that's being made. The CDC requires 6 feet distancing and your giving our 3 feet. I'm son has asthma and am not willing to risk my sons Health/Life for this decision making.
My question... will I/my son be penalized in any way if I decide to keep him home due to his health condition?
your response will be greatly appreciated.

Thank You
J. Oyadomari

DOE plans for re-opening Fall 2020

Dee Tyau <dee.tyau@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 5, 2020 at 12:17 AM
Reply-To: Dee Tyau <dee.tyau@yahoo.com>
To: "catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov" <catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov>, "lynn.fallin@boe.hawaii.gov" <lynn.fallin@boe.hawaii.gov>, "kaimana.barcarse@boe.hawaii.gov" <kaimana.barcarse@boe.hawaii.gov>, "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>, "bruce.voss@boe.hawaii.gov" <bruce.voss@boe.hawaii.gov>, "kenneth.uemura@boe.hawaii.gov" <kenneth.uemura@boe.hawaii.gov>, "dwight.takeno@boe.hawaii.gov" <dwight.takeno@boe.hawaii.gov>, "shanty.asher@boe.hawaii.gov" <shanty.asher@boe.hawaii.gov>, "kili.namauu@boe.hawaii.gov" <kili.namauu@boe.hawaii.gov>, "margaret.cox@boe.hawaii.gov" <margaret.cox@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello, my child goes to public school. We look forward to having him back at school, as live classroom and social interaction is important for school-aged children. However, we don't understand why students will not be required--not even encouraged--to use masks when back in public school, seated only 3 feet apart?? This goes against medical recommendations as well as city mandates to wear masks, especially when in enclosed spaces.

American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that children need to go back to school, and we're all for it. But we question the safety of some planned practices, such as the one about masks. We urge that masks be required while in class/within 6 feet distance of anyone. I would hate for my child to contract the disease or get bullied/made fun of if he's one of the few who wears a mask in class because that's what his parents and science recommend.

Thank you for your service and attention,
Dedania Tyau
"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."
Psalm 31:34

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

lessons to be learned covid 19 hawaiian air

David Nahuina <david.nahuina@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 10:43 AM
To: Janette Snelling <Janette.Snelling@k12.hi.us>, Christina Kishimoto <Christina.Kishimoto@k12.hi.us>, BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I understand that policies and procedures are in place for school opening. I know we are all aware of the Hawaiian Airlines Training Covid 19 outbreak. I hope the department of education uses this situation as a learning tool. The **transmission** was in a classroom setting.

We, the DOE, need to take a very hard look at what happened in this outbreak and use it to adjust/alter or confirm our protocols that we have planned for the opening of schools. We must be proactive and make the appropriate changes quickly and responsibly. I hope that a thorough study by the DOE has been done with Hawaiian Airlines. To just read the brief or news bulletins is not enough. People's lives are at stake, and we have an opportunity to learn from a horrible situation that we do not want to replicate.

Thank you,
G. David Nahuina
(DOE teacher 20+ yrs)

I am nervous about school opening, my 82 year old mother lives with us. If I brought home Covid 19 and something should happen to her, or my wife and three children; how do I live with that...

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

lessons to be learned covid 19 hawaiian air

David Nahuina <david.nahuina@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 8:57 PM
To: Janette Snelling <Janette.Snelling@k12.hi.us>, Christina Kishimoto <Christina.Kishimoto@k12.hi.us>, BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I wanted to share that as concerned as I am I do understand my role as a public servant. I come from a large family of educators. My mother is a retired educator. and my sister is a teacher and I have uncles, cousins and 2nd cousins that are teachers. We take great pride in our profession. My only concern is that we are being proactive as things are changing so quickly. We, as a State went from being almost flat to a rising curve. I understand the challenge of bureaucracies and how difficult it is to adapt to change. We must be proactive.

Thank you
David Nahuina
[Quoted text hidden]

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Teri Ichiriu <tichiriu@aol.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 9:15 PM
To: BOE.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

This letter is being written on behalf of Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am both an educator and a parent of a child attending public school. I have deep concerns that temperature checks will not be done for every student and faculty member before they step foot on campus. Once an infected individual steps foot into a classroom, too many people will be affected and possibly infected. Also, social distancing should be 6 feet, minimally and mask wearing should be mandatory all day. Please consider these concerns for the welfare of students and teachers.

Thank you,
Teri Ichiriu
Educational Assistant
Kalākaua Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michael Fricano II <michael.fricano.ii@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:22 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I would like to submit testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Michael Fricano II. I have been a K-12 educator in Hawaii for the past 13 years and I have many friends and colleagues that are educators in Hawaii and are parents of children that attend public schools in Hawaii.

I am scared for everyone that have to go back to work in public schools starting at the beginning of August. And I fear that for many that it might just be a matter of life or death for them to go back to their campus.

Recently HSTA and the Hawaii DOE signed a contractual agreement on the reopening of schools. That agreement explicitly stated: “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.” It was also shared by HSTA that the HI DOE would not negotiate on the use of face masks in schools. That notion to not agree on the use of face masks was perplexing to me and dangerous.

A few days later the HI DOE Superintendent, Christina Kishimoto, went on the news to explain to the public that not only would schools be able to social distance classrooms with a 3 foot rule but that students would not be required to wear masks. Both of these ideas are asinine and dangerous. By allowing for school administrations to adhere to these guidelines is creating a life or death situation for many people at the school level.

I've heard from several fellow educators that their administration is citing the American Academy of Pediatrics “COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry” as their reasoning for their asinine decision making. If this is true, then I'd like to point out several ideas from this resource that directly go against the HI DOE's guidance on 3 feet and no mask requirements.

1. *“Evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space,* ***particularly if students are wearing face coverings*** *and are asymptomatic.”*

2. Elementary School Guidelines: *“****Children should wear face coverings*** *when harms (eg, increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction). “*

3. Secondary School Guidelines state: *“****Universal face coverings in middle and high schools when not able to maintain a 6-foot distance*** *(students and adults).”*

These three items are direct quotes from the AAP's Guidance for School Re-Entry and are counter to the HI DOE's guidance on 3 feet social distancing and no mask requirements.

I would like both the Board of Education and the Hawaii DOE to reconsider its decisions and guidance on how best to protect everyone at public schools in Hawaii. **Requirements** (not guidelines) should be set in place for all campuses in Hawaii to follow a rule of 6 feet social distancing in schools and everyone should be required to wear a mask.

In this unique time, the health and safety of everyone in our schools should be the most important thing to consider above all else when creating reopening plans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Michael Fricano II

Educational Technology Integration Specialist & Maker Ed Educator

Google for Education Certified Trainer | Product Expert { Google Classroom, Google for Education, Google Expeditions/Tour Creator
















~ Children need our presence more than our presents. ~



www.EdTechnocation.com | www.arvreduhub.com

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

phd mau <phd4mauimommie@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:01 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I would like to submit testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools' plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Jill Schwindler. I am a K-12 educator in Hawaii and I have many friends and colleagues that are educators in Hawaii and are parents of children that attend public schools in Hawaii.

I am scared for everyone that has to go back to work in public schools starting at the beginning of August. And I fear that for many that it might just be a matter of life or death for them to go back to their campus.

Recently HSTA and the Hawaii DOE signed a contractual agreement on the reopening of schools. That agreement explicitly stated: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible." It was also shared by HSTA that the HI DOE would not negotiate on the use of face masks in schools. That notion to not agree on the use of face masks was perplexing to me and dangerous.

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I've heard from several fellow educators that their administration is citing the American Academy of Pediatrics "COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry" as their reasoning for their asinine decision making. If this is true, then I'd like to point out several ideas from this resource that directly go against the HI DOE's guidance on 3 feet and no mask requirements.

1. "Evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space, particularly if students are wearing face coverings and are asymptomatic."

2. Elementary School Guidelines: "Children should wear face coverings when harms (eg, increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction). "

3. Secondary School Guidelines state: "Universal face coverings in middle and high schools when not able to maintain a 6-foot distance (students and adults)."

These three items are direct quotes from the AAP's Guidance for School Re-Entry and are counter to the HI DOE's guidance on 3 feet social distancing and no mask requirements.

I would like both the Board of Education and the Hawaii DOE to reconsider its decisions and guidance on how best to protect everyone at public schools in Hawaii. Requirements (not guidelines) should be set in place for all campuses in Hawaii to follow a rule of 6 feet social distancing in schools and everyone should be required to wear a mask.

In this unique time, the health and safety of everyone in our schools should be the most important thing to consider above all else when creating reopening plans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jill Schwindler

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: school social distance

Irene Newhouse <einew@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:26 AM
To: "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

Enforcing social distance with children is going to be extremely difficult at best. Red977ucing it to 3 feet in schools is sheer irresponsibility. The average age of those coming down with covid-19 is dropping & increasing numbers - though very small - of children with devastating effects are observed.

This is a horrible idea.

Irene Newhouse
129 Walua Place
Kihei HI 96753
808-264-6977

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Testimony for Safety of Hawaii Public Schools

Julia Chong <julia.mi.chong@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:39 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I would like to submit testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Julia Chong. I have been a K-12 educator in Hawaii for the past 13 years and I have many friends and colleagues that are educators in Hawaii and/or are parents of children that attend public schools in Hawaii.

Being a high-risk individual with asthma, allergies, and borderline diabetic, I am scared for everyone that has to go back to work in public schools starting at the beginning of August. I also worry that for many it might just be a matter of life or death for them to go back to their campus, because not only may the be high risk for health reasons like me, but they are pregnant or fall in the elderly category.

Recently HSTA and the Hawaii DOE signed a contractual agreement on the reopening of schools. That agreement explicitly stated: “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible.” It was also shared by HSTA that the HI DOE would not negotiate on the use of face masks in schools. That notion to not agree on the use of face masks was perplexing to me and dangerous.

A few days later the HI DOE Superintendent, Christina Kishimoto, went on the news to explain to the public that not only would schools be able to social distance classrooms with a 3 foot rule but that students would not be required to wear masks. Both of these ideas are asinine and dangerous. By allowing for school administrations to adhere to these guidelines is creating a life or death situation for many people at the school level.

Recently, we have been hearing that this virus is airborne, and should someone transmit the virus through respiratory droplets, it can spread close to six feet. A lot of individuals tend to be asymptomatic, and have difficulty keeping their hands away from their face and socially distancing. While I understand how socialization is important for child development, I can speak from experience, that teaching just 6 individuals were challenging because they needed constant reminders to put their masks on, keep their masks on especially if they sneezed or coughed, and to socially distant **especially** if their masks were off due to eating snacks.

My other concern is that I teach at a military school where the majority of our population has a parent who has to deploy or go away for a short period of time. Upon their return, they may not "self-quarantine" themselves putting them more vulnerable to spread the disease.

I would like both the Board of Education and the Hawaii DOE to reconsider its decisions and guidance on how best to protect everyone at public schools in Hawaii. Requirements (not guidelines) should be set in place for all campuses in Hawaii to follow a rule of 6 feet social distancing in schools and everyone should be required to wear a mask.

In this unique time, the health and safety of everyone in our schools should be the most important thing to consider above all else when creating reopening plans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Julia Chong
Grade 6 Teacher at an Elementary School

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

testifying

karen f <mattmattmaui@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:48 PM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

**Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Aloha,

My name is Karen Figueira and I work at Haiku Elementary School. I am testifying on behalf of Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. The CDC's guidelines state that all persons should be 6 feet apart and wear masks at all times in order to create a safer environment. It was agreed upon between HSTA and the BOE that those guidelines would be met to ensure the safety of both staff and students.
By not following CDC guidelines you are putting all persons at risk. COVID cases are on the rise, with 41 reported cases in Hawai'i state today alone. Which is the largest single day reporting we've had since the outbreak began. Original was 34 cases on April 3, 2020.
My coworkers who are in the 'high-risk' category for various reasons are not being taken care of. Students who fall into high-risk category are not being taken care of. This is unacceptable.
If the epidemiologists, scientists and doctors, who know a lot more about Health than us as educators do, why are we not listening to them to the fullest extent? This is not an issue to be taken lightly. Cases are already on the rise in Hawai'i and tourism hasn't even opened up. Tourism is opening the week student's return, which will absolutely cause an even bigger rise in cases.
Please show your fellow educators that you value us, our health, safety, and ultimately our lives. Show your students and families that you will take all the steps necessary to ensure we are as safe as possible.

"You cannot ask teachers to risk more than you, yourselves, are willing to risk"

Mahalo for your time,

Karen Figueira
Haiku Elementary School

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Bruce Ito <bitolaw@att.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:02 PM
To: "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

I am writing with regard to the social/physical distance requirements for re-opening Hawaii's public schools.

I urge you to follow the CDC Guidelines with regard to social/physical distancing.

First, for the protection of the students, teachers and members of their families. We now know that younger people may be asymptomatic and so can be unsuspecting spreaders of this terrible disease. It would be tragic if we were to learn that schools became a super spreader sending the disease to the households of students and teachers and their family members.

Second, today, we learned that Hawaii has experiences a record number of infections. The spread of the virus is not controlled. Hawaii's testing rate is only about 6%. This is lower than the nation's dismal 9% testing rate.

Third, following the CDC Guidelines would be a valuable argument in the event to litigation initiated by someone who became ill from exposure to student or teacher.

Bruce M. Ito

(Liliuokalani Elementary, Kaimuki Intermediate, Kalani High, University of Hawaii)

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Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Michelle Brown <mbmaui@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:39 PM
To: "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

I am writing to express my disappointment in the decision to not follow CDC guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID in our schools.

The idea that we should be 3 feet part without even mandatory face covering is a negligent policy and shows lack of concern over the

risks we are facing. The lack of guidelines to to protect our community from people traveling here without ensuring they are free of the

virus is bad enough. But to put KIDS and TEACHERS in close proximity is a recipe for disaster. Please show us the respect we deserve

by reversing this policy. Consider delaying school one month (it can be extend at the end of the year) or allow on-line to start so we can

collaborate and come up with a plan makes sense as we see how our Island resources will be dealing with the outbreak that is sure to

come.

Michelle Brown
Science Teacher
King Kekaulike High School

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Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

assurance

David Nahuina <david.nahuina@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:06 PM
To: Christina Kishimoto <Christina.Kishimoto@k12.hi.us>, BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dr Kishimoto and the Board of Education,
I totally respect the chain of command and the fact that you are my superior. I also understand that I have chosen to be a public servant, a teacher.

I would like your assurance that you and the Board of Education feel that the school opening plan is safe for me and my family. And that you all would not hesitate to teach and interact with the 100+ students that I will be teaching each week.

You all are privileged to much more information than I. I do not need to know the details, only that you give me your personal assurance that my mother, wife and children are in a safe situation with your school opening plan.

Would you be willing to trade your office for my classroom? I am asking for your assurance.

Respectfully,
G. David Nahuina

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Marissa Carlos <marissa_carlos@hookele.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:11 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I feel that if CDC is recommending the public to be at least 6 feet away from each other and to wear a mask where social distancing is not possible, this should also be the case in classrooms. I would like my children to be safe during all school hours. I have 2 children, a 10th grader at Campbell High School and a first grader at Ho'okele Elementary. I also work at Ho'okele Elementary.

Thank you for your time,
Marissa Carlos

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Safer is Smarter

Elaine Mills <beadmills@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Follow CDC guidelines or the DOE will pay in COVID-19 testing, cleaning and possibly worse loss of a beloved student(s) or school member(s). Safer is Smarter keep it at 6 feet.

Concerns schools reopening

carla reader <creader13@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:00 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE, I am a preschool Special Education teacher at Princess Nahienaena Elementary on Maui. I have concerns about the reopening of the HI DOE Schools.

First off, it is very important for the safety of the students and classroom staff that the HI DOE follow the "recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The agreed language states that: "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Secondly, I have concerns about my preschool special education students wearing masks in the classroom. I have at least 1/4 to 1/2 of my class that have special needs making mask wearing unsafe. And, due to the young age of my students , I know that myself and classroom staff must be closer to a child than the recommended 6 feet. My students need physic assistance When eating, using the toilet, and while completing basic life tasks and educational tasks.

I have concerns and proper Classroom cleaning , daily health monitoring and being able to find support and childcare for my own family if my own children cannot come to school full time

Please help keep the children of hawaii safe.
Thank you.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sherene Hajiro <sahajiro@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening school's plan for 2020-2021 School Year.

As a parent of two elementary school students in East Oahu, I am very concerned that the Department is allowing less than 6 feet of separation between and among staff members and ESPECIALLY students. Per CDC and Sate DOH guidelines, it should be 6 feet. I would like to know where the Department is getting guidance that a modified distance or less than 6 feet is acceptable.

I am very proud of the State of Hawaii, under the leadership of Governor Ige, has been proactive and prudent in the response to the COVID-19. In doing so, it has kept the number of people infected with the COVID-19 rather low when compared to other states or even countries that are the size of Hawaii. Let's continue to keep our keiki's and ohana safe by following the data-based, scientifically proven data of at least 6 feet. Honestly, the Department will command a lot more respect in keeping health and safety as priority rather than trying to figure out how to accommodate kids in classrooms. This situation is unprecedented, but it is also not going to be forever. In the meantime, let's practice Aloha and keep everyone safe.
feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

I am not writing this to put anyone down. I am writing as a mom who is very worried about her two vivacious daughters who are eager to return to school, but also scared that they might get the COVID and spread it to their grandpa at home. Please...do the right thing and follow the CDC guidance.

Sincerely,
Sherene

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Safety in opening schools

Fran Yee <fkyee1@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: info@hsta.org, kananikekuawela@gmail.com

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:20 AM

https://www.facebook.com/1267396607/posts/10222481167399107/?d=n

Dear Board of Education/ legislatures

I'm sending a news report on the value of wearing a mask and social distance. I would love to return to a normal face to face classroom but being an Ovarian Cancer survivor of 2 years I'm careful. The other problem I have is the guilt I would have if any of my students came down with COVID-19 and also infected older loved ones at home and I didn't at least try to share information I have kept up with. Please take a minute to watch the video before making a final vote.

Thank you
Fran Yee
Makalapa Elementary
Grade 5 Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kathleen Royer <kroyer19@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:24 AM
Reply-To: "kroyer19@yahoo.com" <kroyer19@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

My name is Kathleen Royer, I am a teacher at King Kamehameha III school in Lahaina. I also have children that attend my school.

Three feet distance is unacceptable. We can not assume that children will be able to "face forward " all day. We should be following the guidelines of the DOH in order to protect ourselves, our keiki and their families.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony VI(A)

Starr Asselin <sbeaner57@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to urge the BOE to honor the agreement to keep students and staff health and safety as their top priority in the reopening of schools by maintaining the agreed upon and CDC recommended 6 feet of distancing for classroom seating configurations. Thank you.
Sincerely,
Starr Asselin
4th grade teacher
Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

Joddie Kamalu <jkamalu12@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:33 AM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I currently work with special education students at Kalani High school. We diaper and change students everyday. Some of the students can and will get physical at times, (I have the scars to prove it as well as other coworkers), this may include spitting and biting. Social distancing will be impossible. Insulating each worker from the virus provided by the government will include maybe: masks, gloves, and face shields possibly. Testing each student everyday might help, especially on Mondays after a weekend. Students were being sent to school by their parents regardless on whether they had a cold let alone a fever was happening all the time.

What will the school do should one of them test positive for the virus? This maybe only a be a matter of time. Will a 14 day quarantine period for everyone who was exposed to this student be imposed?

--
Sent from Gmail Mobile

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Donna Sabis-burns <dr_sabisburns@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

I am in a high risk category for contracting COVID. Risking my life for my job, a job where my state administration feels teacher lives and keikei lives are apparently disposable, should not be a decision I have to make. If a horrible intruder came to campus and for Ed me to defend a child, I would. But when my boss throws me into harms way, purposefully, I say no more.

I have a PhD in education and thought being in the classroom was a chance to “get back to my roots” and gain some professional development while here in Hawaii. With regret I have now left my job teaching at Hickam Elementary. I can’t knowingly and intentionally go to work and endanger my family AND my students in this situation.

I just accepted a job at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, DC. I have shared this bait-ñ-switch move with my colleagues and you know what they said, “That’s Hawaii for you!” How can this beautiful state gain its notoriety for all the hard work being done to make educational gains, then turn around and put your teachers and students in harms way? That’s not good press.

My son will be a senior this year at Radford High and now I have to rethink how his most meaningful year of high school will go with the idea of not wearing a mask. It sets the tone. Kids make fun and tease. For a child in the autism spectrum like mine, change is already tough. But he knows what is right and will wear the mask. If he is made fun of or put down in any way, the school and district will know our names well.

Honor your agreement. Keep the 6’ distance and wear the damn masks.

Sincerely,
Donna Sabis-Burns, PhD

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Testimony

Nara Takakawa <ntakakawa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board of Education:
My name is Nara Takakawa, and I am a 7th grade special education teacher at Central Middle School who is testifying about **Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**."

My students regularly come to school sick and coughing. As a special educator, I often need to get very close to my students in order to talk to them privately. The combination of these two factors has meant that at least once a year, usually in February or March, I catch something that starts as a tickle in my throat and turns into bronchitis. It typically can take 2 or even 3 months for the cough to fully disappear.

At the start of each school year, to reduce my chances of getting sick, I showed my students a video of someone sneezing and how far the microdroplets of saliva travel. I trained each new group to cover their mouths when they sneeze or cough. I repeatedly remind students to "sneeze in your sleeve and cough in your cuff." If they were actively coughing, I put a box of tissues on their desk, so it was within easy reach. After the sneeze or cough, students disposed of the tissue, and used hand sanitizer or got sent to the bathroom to wash their hands with soap and water. I tried to wipe down desks daily with disinfectant spray or wipes if I had kids who were coughing, or weekly if I didn't. During flu season, I always got the flu vaccine. These are the precautions I have been taking, but I still became ill at least once, sometimes twice, each year.

I used to think that getting sick was just the price I had to pay for being a teacher. However, I can no longer afford to think so cavalierly since contracting Covid-19 could mean a death sentence as it has for 74 of my colleagues in New York.

This is why I was surprised and disappointed to discover that the DOE has recommended a policy of only a 3-foot distance between students if they are facing the same direction, and without masks! This recommendation assumes that students will never turn their heads or bodies to face their neighbors. The seventh graders I teach are constantly moving, turning around to talk to their friends or see what's going on in some other part of the classroom, and reaching over to touch their classmates. It is incredulous to believe that simply because the desks are facing in the same direction, the kids will always be facing the same direction as well.

I urge the BOE to return to the CDC's recommended 6-foot distance between desks as agreed upon in the MOU that was signed barely one week ago between HSTA and the BOE.

Please demonstrate that the BOE is sincerely concerned about the safety and health of Hawaii's keiki and teachers.

Respectfully yours,
Nara Takakawa, Ph.D.
Special Educator
Central Middle School

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Jill Benson <jill.benson@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,
I urge you to please consider the safety and health of Hawaii's children and continue implementing the 6 ft recommendation by the CDC in the classroom.

I am a teacher at Kamali'i Elementary in Kihei, Maui. Our school is currently moving forward with Model A, which allows for all students on campus full time. I am terrified that our school will become an island hotspot. We will be cramming children into classrooms with limited space during a pandemic. Our classrooms can only fit 22-24 children if we remove all other furniture in classrooms and make desks 3 ft away from each other, with all students facing forward and in masks all school day. The school day will become less about learning and educational experiences, and more about keeping students seated and masked, in order not to spread or come in contact with a possible virus.

Please consider what this type of classroom environment will do to our students' social and emotional learning. We can no longer encourage discussion or collaboration when the focus of the day becomes on keeping a short distance from each other and not spreading germs by facing one another to share ideas. With 6 feet we could allow students more space to move more freely and communicate with their peers at a distance that does not affect their health.

Please consider keeping the 6 ft rule in and out of the classrooms in our school communities. We desperately want to keep our keiki and staff safe.

I appreciate your time.

Jill Benson, M.Ed
Second Grade Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 feet apart

Jayne Heinze <jaynehsta@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:07 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
As a 20+ year veteran Elementary Education teacher, I am writing to you to urge you to use the 6 ft apart standard for students within the classroom. For this reason alone, 6 feet will ensure that, at minimum, the students will be 3 feet apart. We all know it will be a struggle to ensure that students, especially young students, practice social distancing, which is the proven way to flatten the curve and keep everyone safe.
If you choose the 3 ft apart guideline, students will come into contact with each other and staff.
In these times, it is best to err on the side of safety.
Thank you for reading and for being a strategic part in students' education.
Mahalo nui loa,
Jayne Heinze, Professional Educator, Waimea Elementary School, Big Island, HI

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Elizabeth Gaccione <elizabeth.gaccione@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2021-2021 School Year. As a young teacher with a serious chronic respiratory disease, I have been advised by my physicians that going to work in an environment that does not abide by the CDC guidelines of at least six feet could pose a serious health risk. I love my students and want to show up for them in every way possible, but in the three years I have worked at the DOE, I have had several serious respiratory exacerbations caused by contaminated environments and/or seasonal respiratory infections contracted from students. As a Special Education teacher, I am also acutely aware of the needs of our more vulnerable students, and both the challenges with hygiene practices and serious health needs that are involved. Please, on behalf of all students, teachers, and staff, as well as all citizens of the community, reconsider safety recommendations and protocols.

Best,

Elizabeth Gaccione
Wheeler Middle School 2017-2020
DreamHouse 2020-present

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY on masks & 6' distancing in classrooms for THURSDAY's meeting

Manny Dayao <mannydayao@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

- Testimony re. Re-opening plan for DOE, **OPPOSING** DOE's reversal on agreement with HSTA to require masks and 6 foot distancing.

To the decision-makers:

Students NOT being required to wear masks indoors for hours at a time, while not being distanced properly is just all around reckless and irresponsible because you are sentencing them and their teachers to a 100% certainty of the virus spreading and getting them sick. You are sentencing the State of Hawaii to 100% certainty of an increase in transmissions.

While you are intending to help working families out by trying to accommodate having their kids on campus, you are also intending not to protect their children or their teachers.

News reports such as these have been coming out in just the past 24 hours showing that the virus can be spread through the air.

- https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/06/health/coronavirus-airborne-transmission-letter/index.html
- https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-airborne-scientists-open-letter/

In this report, there is video showing airborne aerosolized droplets under special lighting staying suspended in the air for a full 12 minutes.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HavlVBJ5_Mk

Much evidence shows that loud speaking (such as students need to do in a classroom) shows greater amount of aerosols and longer in-air time.

This virus is airborne. Three feet spacing in a classroom means that every time a teacher needs to visit a student's desk, the furthest he or she can be is 1.5 feet. 6 feet is safe. 4 feet is not. 1.5 is a disaster.

My most desperate plea to you:

- Ask the community for PPE. You'll gladly receive donations, I am sure.
- Figure out ways to make masks work.
- Train your teachers on how to make SEL work with masks, or build in time where activities in which facial expressions are important can be done outdoors.
- Work in ways for the kids to take rests from masks outdoors.
- Encourage principals to utilize outdoor areas.
- REQUIRE CDC recommendations as a starting point and do the work to come up with safe solutions instead of giving up because a narrow group of people think it's impossible to do so. We expect students to problem solve; so should the decision makers in charge of their education.

We all can't have true freedom (in this case, opening schools and businesses and keeping them open) without responsibility (taking care for ALL of us to follow protocols that mitigate chances of virus spread). All you will be doing with your current re-opening plan is sentencing the entire state to a longer, deadlier, costlier shutdown, further crippling our economy and slowing our much awaited return to a normal way of life.

Emphatically submitted by
Manny Dayao,
Concerned private citizen
Teacher at an independent school
Parent

Community member

Gmail Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Chantel Navarro <cobrien@makahaelemschool.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:13 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As a parent of 4 and a homegrown Hawai'i teacher, I am asking the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks and wear mask, which is recommended by the CDC. Having students 3 feet and wear no mask is not what was agreed upon, and endangers the health and safety of our keiki and teachers.

I have faith the right decision will be made, to follow the CDC recommendations and keep Hawai'i's future safe! 6 feet with mask!

Mahalo,
Chantel Navarro
Educator of Mākaha Elementary and
Parent of students at Leihoku Elementary and Kamehameha Schools

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Nicole Ilae <nikiilae@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it Ma Concern:

I am testifying on discussion item
VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year..

My name is Nicole Ilae, and I am a teacher at Olomana School. My child will be attending Waimanalo Intermediate.

Please remember HSTA contract where students must be 6 feet away from each other. I am a 49 year old woman and I live with my elderly parents. I do not want any of us to contract COVID 19.

Thank you,

Nicole Ilae

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hear us please

Greg Saggers <sagz7734@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha governor I am Greg saggers a teacher on Windward side at elementary school. I am an advocate of going back to work and educating our kids in our state but not at the expense of my own health and the extended health of others by only being 3 ft distance. For all to be safe research is showing we need to all wear masks and be 6 ft away. Teaching elementary for over 10 years it would be too hard to not keep kids away from interacting w each other so I beleive face masks are required and 6 ft distance so to not have a wide spread the virus. I teach on marine base and am concerned because these families come from mainland where it is worse and I live with my mom and she is 70 and I don't want her getting the virus and dying . I would feel horrible if I brought it home. Me and my wife are over 45 which is the age to be susceptible and I didn't want to get it and get hospitalized either And get complications that may affect me for rest of my life.

I am very concerned about putting my self in danger and seeing so many kids I am a pe teacher and I see the whole school. Much thank you for leading us at this time I am praying for you and government officials to lead us and I know that this is a hard time to lead because of all hard decision s you have to make.

--
Mahalos, Greg Saggers

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Protect us teachers please!

Dr. Phaedra Robinson <drphaedra@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha esteemed members of the Hawai‘i State Board of Education-

I can‘t help but notice that your meetings are virtual, and not face to face. This seems to indicate concern over the potential spread of Covid 19 if several people are in a contained space for an extended period of time. I would like to point out that your regular meeting space, while fully enclosed, is space that is climate controlled. The air is circulated through (presumably) clean air filters and an HVAC system that is well maintained. Very few public school classrooms in Hawai‘i enjoy these same amenities.

Sadly, the conditions of your meeting room- the one that is still not open for regular BOE business- are FAR superior to nearly every public school classroom in this state. The Memorandum of Understanding entered into between the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association and the Hawai‘i Department of Education, states "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible" is part of the reopening deal. It will NOT be possible, if the bait and switch of 6" to 3" between students and staff is allowed. Three feet between students means inches between teachers and students if a teacher is walking around the classroom, as we all know that teachers do.

Please ensure that, at the very least, all items within the MOU between the HSTA and HIDOE are enforced.
Unless and until you are willing to conduct ‘business as usual‘, unless and until every BOE member and every DOE official in the state building is ready and willing to come in to our classrooms- and teach our students with us in the gamut of circumstances across the state, under the same conditions students and teachers will be asked to face, you cannot ask this of teachers. You cannot keep asking teachers to give more than you, yourselves, are willing to give.

You cannot ask teachers to risk more than you, yourselves, are willing to risk.
Please protect your teachers before we have a mass exit from teachers like myself who are at high risk and will need to leave teaching this year if I do not feel protected enough to go to school and teach.

With aloha,
Phaedra Elisabeth Robinson, Ph.D.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Saundra Stallworth <stallworthsaundra@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE:

We are faced with a health crisis that at this time which I there is no vaccine. To not recognize the seriousness of this pandemic is creating a dangerous scenario for the life and health of both staff and students. Many of us fear for our safety and we are committed to our jobs and school community. It is imperative that all precaution is taken in consideration. This is a life threatening situation. I have experienced personal lost of an aunt from COVID-19; as well as an associate whose liver and kidneys are effected for the rest of her life.
To ignore precautions will be a serious measured against health and safety for the school community.

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Cherry Shiu <shiucherry@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:36 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Three feet is not acceptable!

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

laurisa nishimoto <laurisanishimoto@msn.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:39 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

The task that lies before us as educators is a challenging one. If you have any experience working with children you will realize the challenges to enforce the proposed guideline especially with our younger students. Compromising everyone's health by not at least adhering to the CDC guidelines is not acceptable. The 3 feet for social distancing should not be allowed. It will be hard enough to keep 3,4, and 5-year old's 6 feet apart!
Put yourselves in our positions in the schools, do the right thing. Social distancing should be kept at 6 feet minimum and masks should be enforced. It would also be wise and helpful to help fund the schools so that proper supplies and personnel can be hired to keep everyone safe.

Sincerely,
Laurisa Nishimoto
Student Services Coordinator
Keaau Elementary School
30 years served in education

Sent from Outlook

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

David and Elaine Estess <deestess@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

My name is Elaine Estess and I am a teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. I am appalled that the BOE has violated the agreement reached between the HSTA, BOE, and HDOE that states, “Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms’ length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds.” You are placing teachers and students at higher risk by not following CDC guidelines of the minimum 6 feet of social and physical distancing. This change in social and physical distancing requirements at schools is especially concerning because when the state of Hawaii opens it’s doors to tourists I believe that Covid-19 cases will increase significantly. Many family members of our keiki work in the tourism industry in some form which will expose them to greater risk of contracting Covid-19 virus. This worries me because I am am one of those teachers in the high risk category for severe outcome if I contract the Covid-19 virus. Safety and heath should be the utmost concern for students and teachers. Minimizing exposure should be a priority. I implore the BOE to honor the contractual agreement to keep the 6 feet of social and physical distancing guidelines set by the CDC.

Mahalo,
Elaine Estess

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

3 Feet

Barbara Sowers <bsowers4b@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

During this COVID I have to admit I haven't been so worried about my immediate family but more for extended family and friends of those with compromised immunity systems. Several things in the current MOU are worrisome in regards to the safety and health of teachers, staff and students. The model chosen by schools should be required to meet the mask and social distancing recommendations by the CDC not something different. Masks should be mandatory (unless Dr advised to not wear). Six foot social distancing should be mandatory. Everywhere we go currently 6 feet is enforced, Walmart, Pharmacy, Costco etc... Schools will be an uncontrollable breeding ground. Kids hug and touch everything in sight. Even with social distancing, bathrooms, door knobs, cafeterias and other areas will be impossible to keep disinfected.

I have an 88 year old mother in law that I have been helping care for, if I'm exposed by a student who was exposed at home or in the community, it will be the death of my mother in law, she is not able to fight off something like this. During COVID she has been in the hospital twice and just returned hime from a rehab stay. All unrelated to the COVID but she is weak and cannot be exposed yet I'm one of her main care givers and helpers. I'm not the only one in this boat and we cannot control what students are doing outside of school, who they are with, whether or not they social distance etc... It's an impossible situation. Think about those families who have a child with cancer like some of my friends. Their child has been wearing a mask everywhere since he was 3 years old and does it without any problem. It can be done if there is no choice.

The wording needs to be much more definite and not be so soft that administration or those higher up can allow for interpretation of the terms. No one is in that classroom being exposed except for the teachers and students. Admin and District personnel are in their cozy office and not exposed to everything the students are bringing to campus. Even if they have contact with students they only have one in their office at a time and can implement the 6 foot recommendation.

Please for the safety of teachers, students and the community address this change and state that the model being implemented MUST be able to meet the 6 foot social distancing AND masks must be worn on campus.

Thank you, please help us stay safe and stay alive for our school community, family and Ohana.

Sincerely concerned
Barbara Sowers

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kasey Kaya <kuuipo.kaya@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, I am Ku'uipo Kaya, both a Hawaiian immersion teacher as well as a parent of two girls who will be attending ke Kula Kaiapuni o Nāhi'ena'ena from Maui I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.

After hearing the proposed plan and then the changes that were made during the live feed, I am quite concerned with the changes made from 6 feet to 3 feet distancing between students as both a parent and a teacher. Regardless of whether or not we will be creating our own "family like" communities in our own classrooms, I feel cutting the distancing short by 3 feet especially for our students in our enclosed classroom will only create more issues, concerns and perhaps lead to an increase in covid within our classroom, school and eventually community.

Secondly, it is a bit concerning that announcements were made that are direct contradictions of what the agreement with the state was. I am advocating for the safety of our students, community and islands alike in asking you to reconsider the choices you are making when it comes to our education system. I am even more concerned that with the Governor's attempt to open up the state at the same time as we return to school we will likely be another location that will have to shut down again because of our choices to do so.

Mahalo,
Ku‘uipo Kaya

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

Heidi Zucker <heidieasthawaii@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:50 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Heidi Zucker and I work at Pahoa High & Intermediate School. I am teacher with a compromised immune system. My husband also has COOPD; his immune system is compromised.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. Please have six feet distance requirement. Be firm about wearing a mask. We are putting our lives, our families lives and our community lives at risk otherwise.

Thank you,
Heidi Zucker

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Lei Cunningham <honumom@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Danelle Cunningham, I am a teacher in the DOE - Windward District. I am over the age of 60, and have been teaching over 30 years. I have 1 toddler grandchild that lives with my husband and I. My youngest daughter, who has a compromised lung issue also lives with us. Four other grandchildren stay at my house on weekdays after school until their parents can pick them up. I would be putting myself and my family at risk of getting COVID 19 if my student desks and my grandson's student desks are allowed to be 2 - 3 feet apart,... instead of the CDC recommendation of 6 ft distance. I am considering retirement if the State of Hawaii does not value my health and safety by not having a 6 ft distance like they have for banks, grocery stores, Universities and other places of business. Please change the requirement for social distancing in the DOE schools to 6 feet. Teachers' health should be valued just as much as government officials and other citizens of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Danelle Cunningham
Secondary Teacher
King Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

ATTN: Chair Payne, RE: Current DOE Fall Guidance

cgrunenwald@law.gwu.edu <cgrunenwald@law.gwu.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chairperson Payne and Esteemed Board Members,

I am a former public school teacher and taught at James Campbell High School, the largest school in the state, for two years. Today I am writing to express concern for the health of our keiki and teachers given the current pandemic.

The guidance promulgated for the fall exempts the education setting from mask and social distancing requirements imposed by CDC guidance, the Governor, and the Mayor. I realize this is likely due to the inability of the DOE to fully comply with the regulations should in-person classes continue, but placing individuals at higher risk of contracting a disease that could kill them is not the answer.

The DOE has a history of neglecting safety requirements. I taught 37 high school students in half of a portable classroom with only one exit. The windows had bars. I had so many students it was difficult for me to walk around my room to monitor them; I had to squeeze my small frame between one-foot gaps. This was clearly not up to fire code, and when I asked the firemen who walked through on their annual inspection why this was allowed, I was told it was exempt because it was a temporary building. We all know that portable classrooms are not truly temporary in this state. If this is how the schools intend to continue to run, students will not only be at risk in a fire, but of contracting COVID.

I am also concerned that there are no safety nets for teachers who might contract COVID while teaching in unsafe conditions. Infections, if they don't kill you, can still have serious health effects. COVID can put someone out of commission for 2-6 weeks and have lasting breathing and heart complications. Teachers walk all day in order to effectively monitor their students and meet their daily obligations through attending meetings. Additionally, teachers are only given so much sick leave. Many decide to hold onto it, as it rolls over, for when they decide to start a family because maternity/paternity leave is not paid leave unless you use your banked sick time. Teachers should not be expected to use leave they have accumulated for a six week illness they would not have contracted but for the DOE's faulty guidance.

The same concerns for teachers apply to students. Sick students need parental figures to look after them, and thus the DOE is also placing individual families' economic well-being at risk. Sick students may also fall behind academically. The DOE is there to support students, not place them at greater risk of academic failure.

I urge the Board to reconsider the guidance issued by the DOE and to either impose restrictions that mirror the Mayor's guidance for full in-person education or to take a hybrid approach with WiFi support for those that need it. The health and safety of our keiki are your kuleana.

Sincerely,

Cori Grunenwald
Former JCHS Teacher

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher safety

linda jones <jonesybcool@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a licensed special education teacher for 13 years and a general education teacher for the past 8 years in a hard to staff position in the state of Hawaii where I have lived for 50 years. I have dedicated my life to the keiki of this state for 21years.

In 2009 I was called upon to take furloughs in order to help the economy. It was difficult. But could be done.

Now I am being asked to risk my life to help the economy(yet again!! Bear in mind my reduction of pay has never been reinstated!! So I am still paying for the 2009 problem!!!).

RISK MY LIFE!!! The CDC has made it very clear the needed precautions to remain relatively safe... now we are told " but this one says three feet is fine"!!! Why would it be considered at all?? One can always find research to back up any position desired!! So any reason/excuse to place 13000 citizens of this state in a position which threatens their very lives! To lay down our lives, our families' lives, our loved ones' lives so you can "open " the state? Revive the economy??

Because parents need to go back to work? Which means my life is unimportant in the face of the economy!! AGAIN!!

Teachers are the go-to scapegoat for myriad societal problems! Teachers are the go-to to fix for said problems! Now to the extent of RISKING OUR LIVES FOR THE ECONOMY???

One question: would YOU??? Would you willingly go to a job that wasn't taking precautions to ensure you don't get sick and die??? I think I know the answer...
The same as mine... NO!!!

Will you please, Stand up for the teachers!!!! Stand up for our LIVES!!!!

Linda Jones
Language Arts/Speech/Peer Mediation
Lāna'i High and Elementary School

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Sara Anglin <sararanglin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawai'i Board of Education Members,

As both a DOE teacher and a parent of elementary aged children who attend Hawai'i public school, I implore that you require all DOE schools require six foot or greater distancing within our classrooms. As a parent, without this mandate I will not be sending my children to school and be requesting distance learning for them. As a teacher, knowing the mandate is in place is the only way I will feel comfortable going back to face to face teaching. Please make the DOE follow the HSTA's MOA requirement if 6 foot or greater distancing within the classroom.

Thank you,
Sara Anglin

Sent from my iPhone