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

HSTA Testimony against 3 feet apart in schools keep it 6 feet

Marylyn Barbosa <marylyn633@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:04 AM

To Board of Education of Hawaii:

As a school librarian and teacher, I am asking you to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

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 include your name, school or worksite,

Sincerely,

Marylyn Barbosa, Librarian
Maui Waena Intermediate School
795 Onehee Avenue
Kahului HI 96732

Gmail

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

Testimony

Brandonrockwell <brandonrockwell@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I, Brandon Rockwell, 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 it is in the best interest for Keiki to be in the classroom setting. As a 13 year DOE teacher and a parent of an entering kindergarten at Maemae elementary. I feel that school have an ill prepared plan which includes 3 feet of social distancing in classrooms. Where did this 3 foot number come from? Where else in the world is 3 feet an acceptable distance to prevent the spread of covid-19? This seems like a way to get students back in the classroom, which I agree is best. However, as cases are already rising and tourism begins soon, I can't help but feel I am putting myself, my family, and my community at risk. It seems like a risky gamble that I find myself in the middle of.

Some of my colleagues are high risk or take care of family in this category. What about them? One chose to retire and will be replaced by a 1st year teacher most likely according to the principal. That's tough on our grade level in so many levels and that new teacher is in such a challenging position.

Please reconsider and make comprehensive plan to help setup our teachers and keiki for success.

Brandin Rockwell
3rd grade
Maemae Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Blair Kaaihue <kaaihueb@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

3 foot spacing is unacceptable and directly contradicts the written contract agreed upon by the HSTA and BOE. The HIDOE is trying to undermine the Protocols, guidelines and overall health and safety of our teachers and students. Unless they are willing to step in and teach this school year under the conditions they are proposing I strongly urge you to reject this proposal. 6 feet and face masks is the only way to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

Blair Kaaihue
SLL HSTA
Kalani High School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Protecting Hawai'i Families

Angela Tompkins <angihaiku@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Hawaii State Teachers Association <info@hsta.org>

To Whom It May Concern,

I have many concerns regarding the opening of our schools in Hawai'i. I feel that because of our diligence and good luck over the past few months we are becoming cavalier in our disregard for safety guidelines. It is essential that we avoid the mistakes of other states that have made rash decisions that caused massive cases and deaths from covid. Before we open schools in Hawai'i we must ensure that safety protocols are in place. Allowing large groups of students to be crammed into classrooms without proper distancing and not making mask wearing mandatory will cause massive outbreaks in our schools. We've all seen the news reports of family and work clusters and we would be remiss if we did not apply this knowledge to the opening of schools. We know many are asymptomatic and we know large groups become spreading events. Packing over 20 students in a classroom is a horrible idea and we cannot pretend we haven't been warned.
Education and socialization of our keiki is critical, but nothing is more important than their physical health. When we open the schools we must be careful to remember this every step of the way.
Hawai'i has made a lot of progress in education and in regards to respect towards our teachers. Please do not move backwards by putting the burden of our economy opening on the schools without providing safe conditions for our children and our teachers. There must be 6 feet of distancing. Masks must be mandatory. Number of students in a classroom must be capped at a safe number. We have all the data we need. Please let's continue to keep Hawai'i safe.

Angela Tompkins
Robert Szymanski
Kīhei, Hawai'i

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

6 ft social distancing

Owenroj@gmail.com <owenroj@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha - I am a teacher at CKMS, 6 foot social distancing is essential to reopening schools. It is a requirement for all other businesses and government entities so should not be modified for schools. Also temperature checks need to be implemented to prevent sick children from entering the schools, this is also being done at airports, hospitals and many businesses that service the same number of people as the schools. Thank you your consideration of this matter- Richard Johnson

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Donny Maa <dmaa21@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:17 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning BOE,

Donny Ma'a
Safety and Security Officer at Moanalua Middle School
Central District

I have several concerns regarding the opening of schools with more than 200 hundred students on campus.

*How can you monitor social distancing before and after school?

*How will you manage social distancing during RECESS?

*How will you manage social distancing during LUNCH and LUNCH RECESS?

*How will you manage social distancing while moving between classes?

*How long after the school bell to finish school will a student be allowed to stay on campus?

Everyone's main concern this whole time only concentrates on in class or on campus for students. What about movements around campus and who will monitor all of this. SECURITY, will be left to do all the work trying to make schools a safe zone. Nobody ever says anything about our profession! We are the frontline people on every campus. No one thinks about us!

Mahalo,

Donny Ma'a

Gmail

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

Testimony

Anita Tacderas <atacderas@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The 3 feet distancing rule is not acceptable for the health and safety of my students, staff, and teachers. It should be 6 feet since droplets and residual bacteria definitely will go beyond arms length between humans. I am not willing to risk the health and livelihood for the sake of practicality.
There must be more stringent guidelines in place
as well as barriers. Knowing that students will go outside of their proximity easily, safeguards must be in place. This should be a learned behavior for adults as well as children-we are all humans that can learn. As a country, our guidelines are not stringent enough, there must be clear, solid and enforced guidelines without any room for exceptions that can and will result in a grim outcome.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ryan Chatfield <ratchat13@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:27 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha 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 Ryan Chatfield. I teach at Aiea High School, my son attends Mililani High School, and my daughter attends Mililani Middle.

I teach in an air conditioned building that does not have windows and the ventilation has never been cleaned and has no filtering ability so I am already concerned about being exposed to viral particles in my classroom. Allowing students to be less than 6 feet apart and not requiring masks, will drastically increase the odds that someone in my class will be exposed.

If you figure that I have around 120 students, who I am exposed to on a weekly basis, then my odds for infection increase even more. Then you factor in my son who is exposed to maybe 60 students and my daughter is exposed to another 60, then that is at least 240 people that we come in contact with who aren't following CDC guidelines of 6 feet distancing and wearing masks at all times. Our odds of being infected as a family are very high. I received the guidelines from Mililani High School yesterday and I was glad to see that masks in classrooms are mandated for students so that will help but the packet does not mention distancing.

I took my daughter to her physical for 7th grade and her doctor told me to call her when, not if, I need a Covid-19 test. I want to have students learning in the classroom as much as anyone but please give us a fighting chance by mandating 6 foot distancing in the classrooms.

Sincerely,
Ryan Chatfield

Testimony

Terry Low <terry@terryjlow.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:29 AM
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. I recently learned that the Hawaii Department of Education released health and safety guidance stating that students in classrooms could safely be placed three feet apart. This contradicts everything I've read by the CDC regarding safe social distancing, and I'm wondering what health organization the HIDOE is basing their guidance on. I am a retired teacher—I taught for 24 years at Kauai High School. If I were still teaching, I would not return to the classroom with unsafe social distance guidnce, especially since this contradicts the recently approved MOU between HIDOE and HSTA. I will recommend that none of my former colleagues return to school under those conditions. I will make the same recommendation to parents considering whether it is safe to send their children back to school.

Another related concern I have is about how the HIDOE plans to insure that the classrooms and campus is kept clean and safe enough for students and faculty to return. Have resources been allocated to hire additional custodial staff to meet the increased requirements for cleanliness under this COVID 19 crisis? If not, I would also recommend that teachers not return to work until enough additional custodial staff has been hired to meet the increased work load.

These are trying times for everyone in the state, and deciding how best to reopen schools is certainly complex. Health and safety have to come first, and I hope the BOE demonstrates their agreement with that priority through their recommendations regarding these matters.

Sincerely,
Terry Low

Testimony

Ellen Wagner <ellenjwagner@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:41 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 Ellen Wagner and I work at Kalaheo Elementary School on Kauai.

I taught summer school for the "Summer Hub" program at our school. It was a very interesting experience because we began our program during a time of relative safety with no COVID 19 cases on our island for ten weeks. The sentiment in our community was "COVID 19 is not here". We followed safety protocols such as 6 feet distancing and not sharing materials etc." Two weeks into the four week program we had an outbreak of twelve cases and these cases were from a family in our school community who live across the street from our school. The DOH assured us that everyone was safe however our overall attendance dropped to about one half of the students attending and remained this low until "Summer Hub" ended. At this time the parent of one of my students informed me that her child would be staying home because her uncle was being tested because he believed he had been exposed. I also found out at this time that my long-term kidney disfunction is 'chronic kidney disease" which puts me in the high risk category as defined by the CDC. This really brought the reality of the disease home to me. I definitely switched to high alert and made sure that 6 foot distancing was maintained in every way including the traffic flow inside and outside of the classroom. It was an educational experience for me because I found that with the smaller number of students required to maintain six foot distancing we were able to remain safe within the CDC guidelines. I also found that my students performed very well in a smaller group setting despite absences which leads me to believe that attending school every other day would be mitigated by the closer attention that students receive when there are fewer students in the classroom.

I believe that it would be foolish to place students 3 feet apart. The CDC does not recommend this, and this also contradicts the agreement between the teacher's union and the CDC. I believe that if students are this close together, when a student becomes infected, we could end up with hundreds of cases in one school. When it comes down to it, I feel we must protect each individual in order to protect the entire community.

Mahalo,
Ellen Wagner

Cornelio Dytioco EA

Cornelio Dytioco <noeldytioco@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:48 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As much as I want to go back to school I believe that it is not safe right now. Re opening the school would be a disaster waiting to happen. Please reconsider. Unless we can bring back human lives while closing the school back again then please do so and reopen the school. Thank you

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A)

Catherine Caine <ccainecc@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To: Hawaii Board of Education

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A)

I have waited, listened, and participated in establishing a safe return to schools for our students, staff, and faulty only to be constantly faced with rumors and changing agreements. Our schools need to focus on working with an established agreement in order to open the schools up safely. If things keep changing in the face of negative trends for Covid 19 infections, we will find it difficult to believe that the department wants to do anything but open the schools no matter the consequences.

My questions to both the DOE and BOE are:

- Why are we not using the CDC recommendations?
- Why is the MOU with the HSTA not honored?
- Where is the evidence that supports three-foot separation?
- Why are colleges using CDC recommendations of six feet?
- Has the DOE paid attention to the consequence of states opening up too quickly and without regard to safety warnings?
- Considering covid 19 transmission of not only droplets but **aerosols**, which are considered more harmful, can you provide evidence that at least 6-foot distance isn't the least we can do to keep safe?

I encourage you to think about the consequences of the decision to open the schools without safety as the guide to keeping the schools open and students learning.

Sincerely,

Catherine Caine
2015 Hawaii State Teacher of the Year
Waikiki School, Honolulu District

July 7, 2020

Aloha, my name is Lisa Yamada and I teach at Wailuku Elementary School on the island of Maui. I have been in the education field for over 20 years, both in public school and in private.

Today, 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. To ask the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

I am writing against the 3 feet social distancing suggestion. Here are my reasons why. It is unsafe, lots of teachers are in the high-risk category, and children cannot contain themselves.

I'll start off with the 3 feet social distancing rule being unsafe. Our students will be sitting next to other students and "should" be wearing their masks at all times. At Wailuku Elementary School, we have very, very hot summers and we have no air conditioners. These poor students will be having a hard time with breathing if they are wearing masks all day in class. Also, for those students who choose not to wear a mask, or have a medical condition that they cannot use a mask, they will be subject to catching the Covid if a child has it.

My second reason is that 30-40 percent of our teachers are in the high-risk category. Many of us live with elderly parents, children, or young adults. I cannot fathom the idea if one of my loved ones got Covid because of me.

Finally, my third reason is that children cannot contain themselves. Children like to copy their friends. They are very intelligent. Once they notice that their friends are not wearing a mask, they will in turn start to copy them. I was one of these students myself. It's called peer pressure and freedom of choice.

I do not want to be responsible for other people's children getting Covid because they were under my care. Just thinking about any of my children, whether my own, or my students are heartbreaking to me. I am a grandmother of four beautiful and healthy grandchildren and it would cause me such pain and sorrow if any of them got Covid.

So please, it's a very hard decision as it is to put teachers under. We are already under a lot of stress trying to figure out how we can teach our students whether it's online or in school. I support virtual learning, but I know that parents need to go back to work.

Thank you for reading my testimony. I know that you all are under a lot of stress too. Let's think about Hawaii and our keiki. Hawaii is Hawaii for a reason. Let's keep it that way.

Much Aloha,
Lisa Yamada- Fourth Grade Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kahanu Nguyen <kahanunguyen@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kahanu Nguyen. I am a 1st grade teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hawai‘i District on the Island of Hawai‘i. 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.

We need to work together 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 and not allow for anything less. Anything less is unacceptable and dangerous to the health and safety of our public school educators, school personnel, and our keiki and their families.

I passionately implore you to partner with me and my fellow educators by honoring the contractual agreement and in having classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. Thank you for your support and in truly putting our keiki first!

Mahalo,

Kahanu Nguyen, Hawaii District, Island of Hawaii

Gmail

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

CDC Guidelines

Leihua Naeole <leihua@halaukumana.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm writing to share my disappointment in the your latest announcement that suggests that 3 feet social distancing is adequate enough in the classroom setting. You are not only going against what is recommended by the CDC, but you are also disregarding the health and safety of the teachers and their students. Teachers are already reluctant to return to the classroom and this announcement has again brought to mind the thought that an early retirement is our only option. Please, reconsider the 3 foot distancing that is being suggested and give these teachers and students a safer place to learn. I say safer, because I really don't feel like going back to the classroom at this point is the right thing to do.
Kumu Leihua Nae'ole

I ka ʻōlelo nō ke ola, i ka ʻōlelo nō ka make.
Language can heal, language can destroy.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kaimana Chun <kaimana.chun@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:05 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**.

My name is Kaimana Chun and I am a new SPED teacher hire at Kapunahala Elementary School. The CDC recommends that schools space students desks at LEAST 6 feet apart to prevent risk not only for students but teachers as well. I have concerns that providing a minimum of “3 feet apart” does not ensure the safety of our students or teachers. It is impossible to expect students to only face forward in one direction throughout their day as they will surely turn to face and speak to their peers.

It is also a concern that students are not encouraged to keep their masks on in the classroom all day. There is no way to know if they are practicing social distancing outside of the classroom/at home and therefore students could be bringing covid into the classroom. We have read about the use of masks to reduce risk of spreading covid and, for the safety of students (And teachers) in their “ohana bubble” students who are able, should be encouraged to wear masks especially in the classroom.

A concerned teacher,

Kaimana Chun

Gmail

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

testimony

Amy Fiandach <afiandach@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We cannot just make up new safety guidelines to suit our needs. The guidelines that will keep us all safe and coming to school need to be in place. We fail and schools close. We fail and people die. We cannot fail.

Amy Fiandach
Special Education Teacher
Voyager Public Charter School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Justine Silva <justineksilva@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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 Justine Almeida, Im a 6th grade teacher at Kaneohe Elementary School. I am a concerned employee and think the 3 ft distancing is dangerous for faculty and students. We must implement the CDC guidelines and the agreed upon 6ft distancing seriously for the health and safety of everyone involved.

I am a new mother and have been very cautious during the safer at home orders, making sure that my child's health is not compromised. I am dedicated to my profession but when I need to worry about my students, myself and families' health I will not be able to work to my full potential if agreed upon safety precautions are not met.

Safety of all should be held at the utmost importance.

Please reconsider and think about our Keiki and dedicated employees that should feel safe, important and respected in their work and learning environment.

Regards,

Justine Almeida
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jolie Alonzo <jolielehua@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
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 school year.

I am a teacher at Waiau Elementary. I have been teaching for 12 years as a special education teacher. Never have I ever been "afraid" to go to work. Until this school year. I am asking that you mandate at least 6 feet of social distancing for all students.

Personally, our school has chosen Model C. Our Principal prioritizes our safety above all. However, I have been hearing other schools are choosing Model A with only 3 feet of social distancing. It does not sit well with me that the BOE would allow this!

I also have a 6 year old niece (Mililani Waena, asthma), 9 year old stepdaughter (Mililani Mauka El), and 13 year old stepdaughter (Aiea Inter). My elderly parents take care of my 11 month old baby. The thought of my parents contracting COVID because of ME or the Department of Education, is frightening and a huge mental burden that we should not have to bear!

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the voices of the teachers, the parents, the aunties, the daughters of your state of Hawaii. Please advocate for our safety!

Kindly and respectfully,
Jolie Alonzo
Waiau Elementary Special Education Teacher

Mililani Waena Elementary
Mililani Mauka Elementary
Aiea Intermediate

Gmail

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

Testimony

Raena Leleo <raena.leleo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: "Mrs. Raena Leleo" <raeleleo@kamaile.org>

Aloha,

My name is Raena Leleo and I am a teacher at Kamaile Academy, PCS. I'm sending you this email because 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.

Personally, I thought that teaching throughout the Distant Learning time period was very difficult! Not only because it caught all of us off guard, but because of the demographics of our students and their families.

Our school services a student population that consists of at least a 90% poverty rate. Many come to school hungry and exhausted because they didn't get a good night's sleep due to being homeless or living in a crowded shelter. In my personal experience, my students love coming to school because they know that they'll be able to eat at least two meals a day, be in a safe and nurturing environment, and not worry about their safety, because they're in Mrs. Leleo's classroom.....Where it's a calm and safe environment, with high expectations, consistent rituals and routines, and provides acceptance based on who they are as individuals, not because of where they live or what their family income is. In my book, EVERYONE has a right to an excellent education!

With that being said, our students and teachers/staff deserve the right to learn and work in a safe and clean environment! If the CDC is stating that all individuals should be social distancing from each other with at least 6 feet apart in the general public, then why are you stating that it's acceptable to have only a 3 feet distance between students in our classrooms? It's not only unsafe, but it's not following the agreement that was set between BOE and HSTA.

Please understand that we (teachers) will be on the front line teaching our students on a daily basis, and it is important to protect our right to work in a clean and safe environment as well! Many of us teachers also have personal lives where we are care-givers to our elderly or medically fragile family members, and working in a potentially unsafe environment isn't acceptable! Not only are we put at risk, but so are our students! They are the ones that are hurting the most and need to come to school for instruction!

I'm asking you, BOE members, to adhere to the CDC guidelines, reconfigure classrooms to accommodate the 6 feet social distancing guideline, and help our students and teachers get back to a safe
and clean school!

Teachers don't "cut corners" when we teach our students, so I expect the same determination and support from the BOE. Do the right thing and reopen our schools the right way! Our students cannot afford to stay home because of COVID-19! We all have to work SMARTER, not harder. Remember, our students, their families, our school staff, and our (teachers) LIVES MATTER!

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Raena Leleo

Gmail

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

A Teacher's Concern about Covid19 Safety

daniel mclaughlin <danisensei@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:09 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To the Board of Education:
The DOE continues to be behind the curve with regard to safety guidelines for teachers and students. Currently, I am concerned that the DOE has been recommending "3 ft." of distance between students and teachers when schools are scheduled to reopen. Why does the DOE go against CDC guidelines, which recommend 6 ft. apart? Why does the DOE think it appropriate to cut the CDC recommended social distancing by 50%? How can this enhance the safety of our students, teachers and staff?

The DOE has had ample time earlier in the year to plan for and train its teachers, students, staff and parents on the contingencies of blended learning and distance-learning. School effectively ended in mid-March, yet the DOE waited until July 2 to announce its "plan". The DOE has squandered this valuable time, and hopes to open in August with teachers learning about distance-learning options on-the-fly--WHILE school is going on.

I have been involved with the summer Extended School Year program this year, and was shocked that the students of this fragile and law-suit prone demographic were expected to be taught online--when there was NO training for the teachers in this field. Now I know how difficult distance-learning can be: especially when everyone involved, including the students and parents, are not trained.

I would urge you to open schools a month later in order to allow this training to occur. Are we shoving students back into classrooms simply because no one has the training or knowledge to conduct remote classes? Please let that not be the case.

Mahalo,
DANIEL MCLAUGHLIN
TEACHER: ROOSEVELT
1410 HOAKOA PLACE
HONOLULU, HI. 96821

808 782 7498

Gmail

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

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A)

Nikki Morishige <nikki.morishige@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Nikki Morishige, and I am a teacher at Waiahole 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 uncomfortable with the idea of requiring only 3 feet of distance between students in our schools, especially when they are also not required to wear masks in their classrooms. I wholeheartedly understand the need for our students to be physically back at school, and I'm eagerly awaiting the time that we can safely have them all on campus. However, to put that over the health and safety of our students, our teachers and staff, and all our families is unacceptable.

Yes, perhaps it is safe to maintain only 3 feet of distance as long as everyone is facing the same direction. But students, both our littles, all the way up to our high schoolers do not sit facing forward the entire time. They shift, they move, they like to see what their neighbor is doing. I can't imagine trying to get a kindergartener (or middle schooler...or even a high school senior) to sit facing forward the entire time. Especially if they think the teacher isn't looking.

Additionally, learning happens through conversations, peer to peer. With rooms outfitted to provide only 3 feet of distance, and no masks required, this leaves no room for students to safely do so.

With the current guidelines of 3 feet and no required mask, I am very concerned about the health and safety of everyone at school. I know infection rates are low amongst children, but it does still happen. And if it should, I really worry about the grandparents that many of my students go home to, especially those that already have underlying conditions. And I really worry about the teachers on campus who are considered high risk, and about the families that they go home to, including elderly parents that they may be taking care of.

I am asking that it be a requirement that students must keep 6 feet of distance between them, and that they wear masks as much as possible when indoors. Thank you for your time, and your reconsideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Nikki Morishige

4 quick questions if schools open in the Fall (because 1% of covid-related deaths are people with NO pre-existing conditions):

1. If they force me to go back to school and my wife, my child, or myself dies from the virus, can we sue the district considering they knowingly sent me into harm?

2. If someone in my household or class does get sick and I have to isolate for 14 days, is that part of my own sick leave? If so, do I still have to teach?

3. If I get sick at school, regardless of how long I'm out, is that part of workman's comp, considering the district knew I was in danger?

4. Are the schools prepared to have enough psychologists available when and if a teacher, staff member, or one of their fellow students die?

Gmail

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

Testimony

Stacie Mahoe <staciemahoe@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Stacie Mahoe, my son attends Nanakuli 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**.

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."

Please reconsider the three-foot policy and keep the health of student and staff as *the* highest priority in our return to school plan. Six feet needs to be the absolute minimum within a controlled environment such as classrooms.

Stacie Mahoe

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jody Field <ykanegurl@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:18 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I don’t feel 3 feet apart for our students no matter which way they face is safe. Is it now ok to go against cdc and board of health or at the time of agreement wasn’t it 6 feet.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cami Iwanaga <camisemail@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:19 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.

This is my 28th year of teaching and for once I'm considering an early retirement for fear of our possible working conditions. In recent news, we've been seeing a spike again, like that of Hawaiian Air, where people contracted the disease from a meeting. We are being asked to put children closer together (3 ft) when the CDC is still recommending 6 feet, and without requiring masks within the classroom. Students will be exposed to each other for 6 hours a day in these conditions when already they are too young to be conscientious of touching their faces, coughing without covering, picking their noses, sneezing, putting things into their mouths, and constantly touching others or other peoples things, especially these very young elementary students.

Please consider the age of these children and their natural behaviors before sending them all back to school. If the common flu is easily spread between children within a classroom, can you imagine a deadly virus? Please reconsider.

Thank you,
Cami Iwanaga
Konawaena Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Social Distancing

James Atkins <mayotuohy@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher, I want 6’ separation and wearing masks at all times in accordance with CDC recommendations. I know students and parents want that too.

Sincerely James Atkins

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kendra Singletary <ksingletary@kamaile.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:19 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

Kendra Singletary, Student Services Coordinator
Kamaile Academy Public Charter School

HSTA's agreement with the state and the current CDC guidelines state 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.” The recently released health and safety guidelines indicated that spacing students 3 feet apart without masks is acceptable. I strongly believe that this will put our students, teachers, and communities at an increased, and unnecessary risk!

The CDC states that COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact 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. This is precisely why social/physical distancing is essential. Please reconsider the proposed 3' distancing without masks in your health and safety guidelines.

--

Kendra Singletary
Student Services Coordinator
Kamaile Academy PCS
85-180 Ala Akau St.
Wai'anae, HI 96792
Phone: (808) 697-7110 ex.112
Fax: (808) 697-7115
ksingletary@kamaile.org
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https://www.kamaile-academy.org/

Gmail

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

Testimony

brandy eala <brandyeala@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:21 AM
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 the department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Brandy Eala & I am a parent to 3 elementary 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.

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.

Gmail

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

Testimony, Discussion item VI (A). Todd Nishimura Keaau Middle School

Sheri Nishimura <snishimura@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Who is the BOE getting their information that a 3 feet space between students and optional mask is ok in a school setting. I just watched Dr. Josh Green our Lieutenant Governor on the news to keep social distancing of 6 feet, and to wear our mask.
Please list the names of those reducing the requirements for our schools and those implementing them to make it easier for personal law suits against the individuals, not against the state.
I do not want to get sick, and if I do because of poor decision making on specific individuals, I would not hesitate to take legal action against the individual, not the state.
Thank you,
Todd Nishimura
Keaau Middle School

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Testimony

Andrew Lopez <aklopez@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Andrew Lopez and I am a 4th grade teacher at Kualapuu School on Moloka'i. I am writing in response to 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 at all with the idea that we can sit children 3 feet apart in the classroom and maintain a safe environment. I am 63 years old, which puts me at risk - I want to be in the classroom, but I also want assurances that my health and safety are being looked after. I urge you to reconsider your plans, especially in the face of the rising numbers we are seeing daily in the news.

Mahalo,

Andrew Lopez

King; testimony

Michelle King <we3kings808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Michelle King
Worksite: Koloa Elementary School
My child attends Kauai High School

July 7, 2021

To The Hawaii Board of Education

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.

Social and physical distancing avoids the very real possibility to close all schools. Placing students and teachers less than six feet apart, especially without face coverings creates a high risk of spreading COVID-19. Our community is familiar with the six foot distance when shopping or when in a food establishment. This is what is on the news and what our students have learned about COVID-19.

Three feet is unacceptable. With the increase of cases it is important that we all follow the six foot distance rule. This three foot recommendation contradicts our agreement with the state and the recommendations Center for Disease Control and Prevention. There is no room for error if we set the standard to three feet of distance. Why should schools be any different than other public facilities? We should not put our students, staff, and communities at risk.

Sincerely,

Michelle King

Testimony

Stephanie Taira <Taira@kaelepululadybugs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying of 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 Stephanie Taira and I am speaking as a teacher with a compromised immune system and a teacher caring for high-risk kupuna. I teach at Ka'elepulu Elementary School. After school and on weekends, I care for my parents who are in their 80's. My mother has Parkinson's Disease and my father has high blood pressure and diabetes.

I am not comfortable or confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. Additionally, under the plan, students and teachers are not required to wear masks in the classroom. This poses an additional risk to my health, my family's health, and the students and their families health.

I believe in face-to-face education and building relationships with all of my students. However, given the size of our classes and classrooms, it is impossible to provide the best face-to-face academic instruction, when the students are 3' apart, that will keep the students in their seats and keep them safe. Already I spend much of my time teaching children to manage their impulsivity, to keep their hands and feet to themselves, to maintain a proper social bubble, etc. All of this takes away from academic instructional time. In our "new normal", we will need to teach them all of the above, as well as proper hygiene and sanitation procedures. I cannot even begin to imagine how all of the students in a class will wash their hands, socially distanced, several times during the school day without taking up additional academic instructional time.

How can we expect our children to learn when I would need to keep them facing forward, sitting in assigned seats, and not interacting with one another? Classes of 21st century learners need to move, experiment, talk to and listen to each other. Some children need to walk around the classroom. If our classrooms are full with 3 feet of spacing between, most of my time will be spent making sure that students are in their own space. Are we providing the best academic experience for our students with the guidelines proposed by the Department of Education?

On top of the 3 feet spacing, students are not required to wear masks in the classroom. Without masks, I will not feel safe talking to students who are 3 feet away. My students cough and sneeze without covering their mouth, they pick their noses, and they spit when they talk. They are learning the acceptable norms that most adults already know. It's not the fault of any child to forget to cover their nose or use a tissue instead of their shirt sleeve or hand. However, in the world where Covid-19 exists, it is not safe.

I also feel it is important for schools to do temperature checks upon arrival. I have had my temperature checked at hair salons, the Apple Store, and a doctors office. This is done to keep employees and their customers safe. Are the employees at the Apple Store or a hair salon more important than the students and teachers in a school?

In the covid world that we live in, children are required to social distance and wear a mask when they are in stores, getting their hair cuts, eating in a restaurant, etc. Everyday there are messages that tell people "we are all in this together" and that we social distance and wear masks to protect others. As teachers we have a responsibility to teach our children the rights and responsibilities of being a member of a community. Why does the Department of Education think that it is acceptable for children in school to have a different set of rules than what our Governor and Mayor have set in place?

I absolutely understand that children are not as susceptible to Covid-19. However, it does not mean that they are immune from the virus or that they will not expose others to the virus. It is very easy to say that most people will recover from the virus but what happens when it is your family member or your student or your teacher, does it matter that MOST people recover when your child, parent, student, or teacher did not? What trauma will we do to those associated with that person? Can we live with the idea that most of our students lived so the one or two who did not are not important?

I do not want to do distance learning but we need to make sure that ***everyone*** on school campuses is safe. I implore our leaders to make safety for **ALL** the priority and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Taira
National Board Certified Teacher
Ka'elepulu Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony for school safety

Sienna Makarewicz <ohanamaka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I would like to submit testimony for school safety. I am a teacher at Kapaa Elementary School. I do not like the way that we are being asked to return to school in an unsafe manner. I FEAR for my life and that of my colleagues and family. We need at least 6 feet of separation with masks. I also believe there should be an official entry policy. Anyone entering the school should go through a screening. It should include a temperature scan, an antiviral fogging a fresh mask and hand washing. I am 60 years old with some autoimmune issues. My husband is 70 years old and also has an immunity issue. I may have to go out on a medical leave if we cannot open is a safe manner. What is the protocol for when so one tests positive for the Corona Virus? I understand that we need to get our economy going but I really do not want to pay for it with my life! Please protect the schools.
Thank you,
Sienna Makarewicz
Second Grade Teacher
Kapaa Elementary School
Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

testimony for Thursday's BOE meeting

liesl eng <liesl_eng@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:30 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Liesl Eng and I teach fourth grade at Ala Wai. Please reconsider to make sure there is a 6 foot distance between students instead of a 3 feet distance. I am concerned that students may not always face forward at their desks and therefore, germs could be spread easier if a child in elementary school accidently leans over to talk to their friend or turns around to get someone's attention. Teachers in the classroom are concerned for their own health and safety as many have elderly parents at home or some preexisting conditions. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Aloha,

Liesl Eng

Gmail

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

Testimony

Marly Madayag <marlym@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:30 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

I do not agree with Hawai'i Department of Education proposal that we open our schools next month with desk spacing as close as 3 feet. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a MINIMUM of 6 feet. We would not be following the CDC's recommendations for public safety during this crucial time of social distancing. Schools are a community hub and to take unnecessary risks with the lives of our children, families and educators is irresponsible and would be in dereliction of our duty as members of our society to help fight this virus.

"You have an individual responsibility to yourself, but you have a societal responsibility...
We've got to realize we are part of the process...".
- Dr. Anthony Fauci, the Director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases

The public is expected to use a 6 foot rule when social distancing, why is this not the standard in school when it is most crucial? School is where COVID-19 is most likely to spread because school is where different households intermingle. School is the place where human beings move around in their seats and interact with each other because we are human and need social stimulation. It's part of our genetic make up and is crucial to our mental, emotional, and physical development. We have decided to open schools on Aug. 4th because we realize that learning is a much needed social interaction. Schools are specifically designed for social interaction.

I ask that you help us make that necessary interaction safe for our entire community by following the CDC's 6 foot guidelines. Doing so will give our school better chance to stay open and give more our parents the ability to work and which in turn helps our economy.

We can not falter. We need to set outselves up for success. Following the guidelines for 6 ft. can set up the possibility of lessening the distance in the future, but only if we are judicious in our social distancing now. Please do not rush to open under conditions that the general public would not operate in. It is unfair to our children and our educators who have worked so hard to put their teaching online.

We have all worked so hard to social distance. We have all made sacrifices to keep our community safe. Please do not throw away those sacrifices. Make decisions that would make those sacrifices worth it.

Respectfully submitted,
Marly Madayag
Special Education Teacher
Kalaheo Elementary School, Kauai

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cadice Pascual <cadicepascual@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE members,

I am writing to submit my testimony on item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive plan for reopening of schools plan for 2020-2021 SY. My name is Cadice Pascual and I teach 2nd grade on Kauai at Wilcox Elementary. I have taught over 30 years, 20 in Kindergarten and the rest of my years in second, first grade.

I understand the complexity of opening up schools. I understand the need to open schools up because parents need to return to work. But I am scared. I am absolutely afraid to return to work, with the recommendation of students NOT to wear a mask in class, (because classrooms are considered a " bubble " & wearing a mask for K-2 students may cause anxiety.)Also, having students sit 3 feet apart, as long as they face one direction... & without masks is NOT safe! You KNOW it is unreasonable & impossible for 5,6 or 7 year olds sit and face 1 direction without turning their heads! Would any of you feel safe to meet with a group of let say 12 people without masks, sitting 3 feet apart, in an classroom all day? Mind you students will be talking, having conversations, moving, walking, laughing at times...and don't forget kids do sneeze and cough sometimes.

I humbly ask you to please ,please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with desks 6 feet apart.

I am also concerned about DOE 's mask /face covering plan. It's confusing... it states that teachers & staff must wear masks whenever outside of classroom. But, when in their classroom mask wearing isn't necessary because facial recognition and expressions are important to child development. Yet, the next line it states that all adults should cover their mouth and nose whenever 3 feet or closer to students or staff. Here's what I'm worried about... when you wear a mask you protect others, right? Well, let's say a student in class (so not wearing a mask) asks for help. So, I go to help him (now closer than 3 feet) he sneezes or coughs while talking... how am I protected? Students may be asymptomatic but be a carrier. I don't control where families go or what they expose themselves & kids to. I am at risk, I'm older, I have respiratory issues, asthma, diabetes. How is this safe?

Having desks configured with 6 feet distancing will be safer. Safer for all. Think about it says all over the news , stay at home when possible, keep your distance of 6 feet, wear a mask when you are out and about...why then for schools, no mask wearing inside or while on the playground & 3 feet instead of 6? Would you feel safe and comfortable sending your child to school? If your child had asthma & cant wear a mask because of medical conditions, would you feel safe? Please please consider everyone's health and safety. Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,
Cadice Pascual, teacher
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Concerned Educator AND Parent

Trish Shipman <trishshipman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this testimony as both a concerned educator and parent. I work in Hawaii's public schools, and my son attends a public elementary school.

Both my son and I suffer from asthma. Studies have shown that we are high risk for COVID complications. It terrifies me to think about my son attending a classroom where only 3 feet distance is maintained and masks will not be worn.

Additionally, I have been asked in my role as coordinator to substitute for any teachers who are absent. This puts me in a situation to come into contact with multiple groups of students - who are not following social distancing guidelines.

I know that the public is pressuring for schools to open up so that parents can go back to work, but I believe we are doing this at the cost of educator and student health. It's important to remember that schools are places for learning - not childcare centers. Educators are professionals - not babysitters.

Opening schools - face-to-face education - to restart the economy is not the solution. There are other options to provide safe and effective education. Allow face-to-face learning for those students most at risk and provide distance learning for the other students. This creates space and safety so that we won't have to shut our schools down again - which would put us in the same situation we were in last year.

Additionally, our DOE leaders are making decisions without including teacher voice. I feel as though we have no say in our working conditions for the next school year. I feel as though educators and students are being sacrificed so that our economy can open up. It's not ethical.

Trisha Shipman-Lameier

--
Trisha Shipman-Lameier
trishshipman@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Amanda Thomson <ms.amandajane@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Amanda Thomson and I teach special education at Pomaika'i Elementary 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. 3 feet is not acceptable and goes against the CDC's guidelines. As a special ed teacher, I understand how difficult it is to remain separate from your students and still teach them. However, these are difficult and uncertain times and we need to adjust. I shouldn't have to put myself or my family at risk for my job. We live with a senior citizen and I should not be asked to expose him to the virus. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Amanda Thomson

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

Testimony from Teacher at Haiku Elementary School, Maui

arlene fox <afoxmeditations@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:36 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear friends,

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 in behalf of the students and teachers at Haiku Elementary School.
We are hoping for a safe and successful reopening of school. In order for this to happen, we must follow the 6 foot rule for students to ensure everyone's health and safety. Re-opening of school is very important for our community, in order for all to go well, we must follow this rule, so that we won't have to close again due to our own negligence.

Thank you for your support.

Arlene Fox
Teacher
Haiku Elementary School
Maui, HI

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cynthia Reves <creves@mckinleyhs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:39 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 Cindy Reves. I teach at McKInley High School. I ask that the board honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Sincerely,

Cindy Reves

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Gmail

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

Testimony

banyan regina <banyanr@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Esteemed Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you for working for the benefit of education in the State of Hawaii.

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.

As a HSTA representative, teachers have to me their fear of returning to school because they are at high risk. Another concern that teachers have expressed is that students will not be required to wear masks. This compounds the fear.

Teachers want and crave face-to-face teaching; however, they all have families. Some live with elderly parents. Some have medical issues that put them at high risk.

My granddaughter attends Kawananakoa Middle School. My husband works as an EA in a fully self contained classroom at Roosevelt High School. Please help to protect them to the fullest extent.

Please help to ensure the safely of all teachers and students by requiring masks for all - students and teachers alike - while mandating social distancing. Please be proactive.

Sincerely,
Charlene Hosokawa
Teacher, Moanalua High School

Gmail

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

Testimony - Item VI(A) Reopening school plan for 2020-2021

Dawn Chu <dawnlaw@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:47 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I, **Dawn Chu**, am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My child will be attending **Noelani Elementary School** and I am **opposing the 3 feet distance**. Please protect our children and teachers. Allowing 3 foot distance in the classroom without mandating face masks or face shields is dangerous.

Thank you,
Dawn Chu

Gmail

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

Re: our babies well being

Colleen Rezentes <spillmanstax@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha my name is Colleen Rezentes.
I will have 3 children in Hilo Intermediate school and 1 child in hilo high school
Cassidy & Cayden Delacruz
Katie lyn Delacruz
Shania Silva -HHS
My concern is their well being, by me taking a chance and sending them to school is like me heading them to cross a street alone and expect them to know the difference of traffic accidents.
My concern deepens each day we get closer to August. I believe parents should have the option to have their kids sit in on zoom at home while those others who for whatever reasons believe their kids are safe in schools send them and take those chances. Kids are kids until their 21 is what our law says. These children will greatly suffer with a mask on for hours. Why should we torcher them in this manner. Is education really that important 🤷 Well I don't believe their lives are worth taking this chance on.
I believe we should keep our babies home until this is all over and protect our babies.
If one child gets infected, the whole class gets infected and our hospital is not equipped for this. Ty for listening,
A concerned parent😒😒

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Social distancing protocol

Lorinda Riley <lorinda.riley@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing as a concerned parent and public health professor. Allowing only 3 feet between desks in public schools is unconscionable. In addition to putting our precious keiki at risk by not following the 6 feet minimum social distancing protocol you are putting the teacher, the family of the teacher, and the family of the keiki at risk, too. In our multigenerational household any exposure my children experience will be shared with their 75 year old grandmother. This is a risk that I am uncomfortable with. Although I do not wish to increase any social gaps or make life more difficult for those without childcare the BOE‘s solution is dangerous. Splitting the classes up to allow for 6 feet distance is preferable in every way. I urge you to reconsider this protocol. Mahalo for allowing me to share my comments on the DOE‘s plan.

Mahalo nui,

Lorinda

--
Lorinda MNM Riley, MA, SJD
lorinda.riley@gmail.com

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

jamie harden <jmeharden1@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:51 AM

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!
Jamie Harden

Hawaii Board of Education:

My name is Aaron Kubo I am an eighth-grade social studies teacher at Hilo Intermediate School in the Hilo-Waiakea Complex area 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.

As of writing this testimony on July 7, 2020 there are about 1,030 cases in the state of Hawai`i with, according to Civil Beat, many being due to community transmission in recent weeks. Civil Beat reports that last week has shown an average of 18 new daily cases.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website "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."

Prevention options, according to the CDC, are to wash hands often. The CDC also recommends avoiding close contact. The CDC website says "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." The CDC also recommends, among other strategies, to use a face mask to prevent pathogen transmission. The CDC website says to "Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Everyone should wear a cloth face cover in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other

first responders. Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing."

It is understandable that many people in the state of Hawai`i want schools to reopen. Many educators want this too but done in the safest possible way based on the most up to date science available for the sake of all parties involved. This is in the best interest of everyone in Hawai`i as the CDC says there is no vaccine to prevent the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed. People need to wash their hands vigorously/often, avoid close contact, cover their mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others, cover coughs and sneezes, clean and disinfect, and finally monitor their health daily to help prevent the disease.

The aspect that is lacking in the State of Hawai`i's plan (Department of Education) in reopening the schools safely is not following the six feet social distancing and facemask recommendations from the CDC.

Every student deserves a free and public education, but schools need to reopen in a safe way otherwise the system fails when students, teachers, faculty, and staff become ill. When that happens, everyone loses.

Respectfully,

Aaron Kubo, Hilo-Waiakea Complex, Hawai`i Island

Works Cited

1. https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/coronavirus-daily-news-hawaii/
2. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

Gmail

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

Testimony

Casey <ikasah@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We as educators and school staff understand the importance of education for our students, and we would prefer to be in school teaching them, but NOT if it puts everyone at HIGHER RISK for Covid-19. I don't understand why this is allowed even if they all sit facing the same way. We'll all still be too close, not meeting the social distancing requirements. I also don't understand why it is required everywhere else in public to be 6 feet apart, but schools are allowed 3 feet with students facing the same direction. Please consider the risks that we are putting our students and teachers in. I say all of this with great respect of staying safe during this pandemic.

Casey Ferreira☺

Gmail

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

Testimony

tyamashita@hawaii.rr.com <tyamashita@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:58 AM
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.

I implore the DOE to be firm and consistent with physical distancing of six feet whenever possible, even in the classroom.

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. I do not understand why we would not follow this CDC guideline but follow all the others.

I am looking out for the safety of my students, their families, me (with an underlying condition), and my own family.

My name is Tracie Yamashita. I teach at E.B. deSilva Elementary School in Hilo. My child will attend Hilo High School in the fall.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tracie Yamashita
Public school teacher and parent

Gmail

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

Testimony

Andrea Stroescu <andreastroes@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. My name is Andrea Stroescu. I'm a third grade teacher in the KKP Complex on the Big Island.

The 3 feet distancing and new mask regulations will put teachers and their families at risk. My mother lives with me and she was diagnosed with cancer in her small intestine last school year. She had surgery to get it removed but she is prone to sicknesses already.

These new regulations will endanger her as I could be a carrier. She is doing her part and stays at home every day so she is safe.

So please, please have our school keep the 6 feet distancing and have our keiki and school staff wear their masks.

Mahalo for hearing our voices,
Andrea

Gmail

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

Testimony

Laura-Dawn <soulshine6@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:59 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 sitting 3 feet apart without masks on in a classroom is unacceptable. This leaves other students and school staff vulnerable to catching Covid-19. We cannot move the guidelines from 6 feet as this is the minimum standard for safe social distancing as set by the Center for Disease Control just so we can squeeze more students in a classroom.

We all want to be back in the class with our students 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. In Texas and South Africa, we have seen staff contracting the virus at twice the rates of students. 75 teachers in NYC died due to Covid this year. Forcing teachers to choose jobs over their health will not help our teachers or our keiki.

Everyone's safety is important. We have been safe thus far because of the safety measures we have taken. Students and staff have gotten used to online learning and we should stick with safer measures until a vaccine is found.

Thank you for your time,

Laura-Dawn Harreveld-Choy
Special Education teacher
Ahuimanu Elementary
Castle/Kahuku Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kaelee Sanchez <2mrs.sanchez@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kaelee Sanchez, I am a teacher at Kahuku High and Intermediate and mother to a child who attends Kahuku 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.

Allowing students to attend school with only 3 feet between desks, with no masks inside the classrooms is irresponsible! Students love collaborating in class, there is no way that they will refrain from leaning over to talk to a peer if there is only 3 feet between them. Talking (and probably laughing) in close proximity can easily spread the virus. Furthermore, experts are still learning more about the virus, for example, how long it can stay in the air, so starting school without sufficient information puts everyone at risk.

Additionally, many young people are asymptotic if they do contract COVID-19. Our keiki may not realize they are sick, or show symptoms, but they could still be spreading the virus to other at-risk students, staff, and family members. The two days students will have in class with their teachers and classmates will not result in enough of a learning benefit to outweigh the risk.

Personally, I miss teaching and want to return to work. I miss my students and our class dynamic. However, these personal feelings are not as important as keeping our communities safe. We should be extra cautious until we know more information and have a better control of the virus. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kaelee Sanchez

Testimony

David Mireles <davidrmireles@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear members of the State of Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing this 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 David Mireles and I am a school counselor at Kapaa High School.

I am deeply concerned that the Hawaii State Department of Education has stated that spacing student seats three feet apart without masks is acceptable in the coming school year.

This directly contradicts the HSTA agreement with the DOE as well as recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). I believe this contradiction not only is a rollback of the agreement and, more importantly, places our community at severe risk for increased COVID-19 infections. Our small island community cannot adequately respond to the looming crisis of community spread when schools re-open when students are only maintaining three-feet distancing between students and staff and without directly requiring masks.

I urge you to please consider the health and safety of our keiki and my colleagues, as well as the greater community which we serve as teachers and require that the Department of Education adhere to the agreement 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 grounds whenever possible."

Mahalo for taking the time to consider my testimony and helping to educate our keiki and community about minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

Mahalo,

David R. Mireles

Gmail

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

Testimony

Meg Takahama <iteachecse@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:07 AM

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 am an Early Childhood Special Education teacher at Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate School. This school year is the start of my 24th year in the field, and I absolutely love my challenging job.

It was an understandable necessity that schools were shut down for the past fourth quarter due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But.... it was extremely difficult for my 3 and 4 year old students, who could not engage independently and had a hard time attending during remote lessons, as well as for their families. Consequently I am thrilled that face-to-face school services are resuming this August. However the pandemic persists.

Thus, for the health and safety of the school community and the community at large as well as for the continuity of face-to-face services, it is imperative that, per the contractual agreement, classrooms are configured with six feet between student desks. I also strongly support the mandatory wearing of face masks when on a school campus.

Margaret Takahama
Make a Difference, Make a Donation
DonorsChoose.org/meg.takahama

Gmail

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

mandate six feet between student desks

Kerri Ayabe <sakura941028@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:08 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a concerned parent, I do NOT feel safe sending my child to school & sit only 3' apart. The CDC states, "**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)." Disregarding these CDC guidelines are putting our children at "More Risk". DO NOT jeopardize our children and teachers' health and safety. Just because children are less likely to catch Covid, doesn't mean they won't. Reports also said that when children do catch it, their symptoms can be serious. Stop putting our children at risk! Mandate a 3 feet distance between student desks and show that you care about the well being of our children & teachers!!

Sent from Yahoo Mail. Get the app

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cindy Fuauli <cfaumui@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:15 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
I'm Cindy Fuauli office assistant at Iroquois Point Elementary School. As this school year gets closer to open up we are not ready. The numbers of COVID-19 are going up and the concerns of parents are getting intense. The school year should be pushed back to another month just to be sure that the COVID-19 count stays the same or less. We all know that safety for our staff and students is our first priority. This 3-feet social distancing in the classrooms is ridiculous and it's not safe. The spread and spit of children as they talk to each other will eventually reach to them easily. As a parent of two children I don't feel comfortable knowing that's how it'll be in classrooms. Please keep the distance to 6-feet apart. It'll be less likely to be on them as they communicate with others. A lot of parents I know are very much concerned, especially the 3-feet social distancing in the classroom. That is just too close to the individual next to them. If this doesn't comply I would rather have my child do a virtual learning just so I know that my child is safe. Please keep the social distance to 6-feet and if need to push back another month please do. Thank you for letting me voice out my concerns. Take care and God bless you all.

Gmail

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

3 feet is absolutely irresponsible

Andrew Sanchez <andrewsanchez54@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, Kākou

My goodness! Since when have educators not listened to scientists? Since when did we stop caring about our students or staff? The BOE decision to not mandate masks and keep 6ft apart is absolutely preposterous. The blatant disregard for science and best practices will not stand. Please fix this, or else we won't be returning.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

3 ft ruling

Amber Jones <amberlillianjones@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

3 ft between desks is not acceptable or safe. We need to be airing on the extra cautious side. If one kid gets sick what will we do? Will the whole class have to quarantine? And will the teacher be required to use sick days while doing so? Teachers are being asked to risk their lives to do their job, and it is a slap in the face to ignore safety recommendations that could easily be implemented. If they need to be spaced 6 ft apart in the cafeteria then they should be in the classroom as well (where they spend the majority of their time).

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristen Faford <kris10faford@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:19 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha BOE,

My name is Kristen Faford 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 special education teacher at Waiākeawaena Elementary in Hilo, on the Big Island. This year I am teaching in an inclusion setting with 2 other teachers, one which has severe asthma as well as a heart condition. I value my coworkers and we are kind and respectful to each other by staying home when we are sick. They are not only colleagues but have become part of my family. They rely on me just as much as I rely on them to teach and conduct essential duties in the workplace. If one of us is impacted, we are all impacted. Although we are excited about seeing our students again, we cannot afford to compromise our safety first. We all have families and children at home who also depend on us to take care of them. I will NOT return to work if conditions of safety are not met in my classroom and on the rest of the campus. I will not jeopardize my health or the health of my family and coworkers.

With that in mind, I will also not compromise the safety for my students. They are the reason why I do what I do and they deserve to be safe and protected at best. Parents deserve to know without a shadow of a doubt that we have their best interest in mind when they show up to learn. I will not jeopardize my trust with parents.

My family and I have decided that I will not show up on the first day of instruction until I know that teachers and students are being supported and that you, BOE and Superintendent Kishimoto make change to what the CDC and Dept. of Health, as well as my colleagues across the state believe will keep our communities safe and healthy. I am advocatIng for my coworkers, students, their families, my family, and for myself.

Sincerely,
Kristen Faford
Wife, Mother, Special Education Teacher, Colleague, Friend, Community Member

--
Kristen

Gmail

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

3 feet distance needs to be 6 feet..

jenningse001 <jenningse001@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education
Thank you for your time.
It's interesting to the the whole world and all the scientist in the world agree on a 6-foot distance as the minimum to be a part for the covid-19 virus.. but somehow you guys as a board think three feet is okay for students..

It concerns me that the health of our students is not as important as the rest of the world to you.

Why do you want to put our children's life at risk to save a couple dollars shouldn't the future of your state be more important than saving a few dollars..

I strongly oppose the three feet distance for students..

Thanks for your time
Erik Jennings
West Maui resident

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

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

Testimony

Rachel Kingsley <rakingsl@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,
I am writing in regards of 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 the DOE is currently planning on reopening schools not following the recommended guidelines of maintaining a social distance of 6 feet between students. I am concerned and feel highly upset that the DOE is not taking the proper precautions to protect every individual student and faculty member that works in our local schools.
While I do not have students in any of the local schools, I am an informal environmental educator who visits many schools on the island of Hawai'i as part of my job. I know that in order to keep all students, faculty, staff, and myself safe I will not be able to visit the schools as I have in the past. I am planning on creating my own criteria to keep all safe and will be strictly following the guidelines set by the CDC. I am redoing all of my presentations and will be working with local educators to provide the same material but in a safe online manner. There is no reason to put anyone at risk when it is not necessary.
It's a shame that we cannot rely on the DOE to help protect those who work and visit the local schools to do the same. I urge you to strongly reconsider the proposal and follow the guidelines to protect all of the staff, children, and faculty instead of putting them at a higher risk than is necessary. The guidelines are set for a reason and we should all be following them to the best of our ability. This does not include rushing students back into classrooms at forcing them to be positioned only 3 feet apart. Please do your part to help keep our communities safe.
Mahalo,
Rachel Kingsley

--
Rachel Kingsley
'Alalā Education and Outreach Associate
Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit
University of Hawai'i Mānoa
C/O Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
19 East Kawili St.
Hilo, HI 96720
Work Phone: (808)348-7898
alalaproject.org

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

Testimony

Rena Shiroma <rena.shiroma@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:21 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.

I'm asking the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Thank you,

Rena Shiroma
Special Education Teacher
Wheeler 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.

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

Testimony

Lynn Nakahara <lynnn@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan fo the 2020-2021 School Year.

Please do not lower the recommended 6 feet apart spacing of students to only 3 feet.

My daughter works at Farrington High School. My grandson will attend Mililani Ike Elementary School.

I am a medical laboratory scientist, retired after over 30 years of service at Tripler Army Medical Center.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Lynn Nakahara, MLS (ASCP)

Gmail

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

Testimony

Maddlyn Sivilli <mcsivilli@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I have worked as a teacher in Hawaii public schools for a number of years. It terrifies me that there is no standard expectation for schools to deal with social distancing and health issues come the new school year. I am worried about the tens of thousands of students and thousands of teachers who will be at risk if and when schools do not take an appropriate approach to the issue of COVID-19 spread and infection. I know many students and teachers personally, and it is scary to think that their best option may include staying home from school or finding a new job because without mandates based on scientific and CDC guidelines, many schools will become centers of infection.

I know that the people who work in our school do the best they can everyday. They show up for the students repeatedly and that cannot be underscored enough. The DOE employees are trained to be teachers and administrators; they are not government officials nor scientists. The government officials should be the ones making decisions based on scientific fact and procedure. The administrators and teachers then can work to implement those expectations. **These requirements need to include that every child and adult wear a mask throughout the entire school day and that everyone needs to maintain at least six feet of social distance.** Children and adults will not be safe if there are no masks or social distance.

Thank you for your time in this manner.

Maddlyn Sivilli

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ian Ferris <ian.ferris@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:31 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 school's plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. My name is Ian Ferris and I am a teacher at Waipahu High School and a parent of a child at Pearl City Highlands Elementary.
I ask you to strongly reconsider the 3 feet mandate on the separation of students in the classroom. It is not only dangerous but foolish as well. While Hawaii is not on the same level as other mainland areas, we should not be putting ourselves in situations where we are putting our keiki, our teachers, or our ohana at increased risk for catching the coronavirus. For myself, I have one child in elementary, another in preschool, and my wife and I are both teachers. If my son's and my school were to implement the 3-foot rule as opposed to 6, it puts not just he and I at risk but also needlessly exposes my wife and daughter to increased risk AND all those that they interact with at their schools. I urge those on the board to use their better sense and put the safety of our families here in Hawaii first.
Mahalo,

Ian J. Ferris
Waipahu High School
Social Studies Department
Academy of Professional & Public Services
Waipahu Marauder Baseball Program
(808) 307-9452 | ian.ferris@k12.hi.us | iferris@waipahuh.k12.hi.us

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

Testimony

Amber Waracka <awaracka@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am emailing to testify 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 teacher at Kalanianaole Elementary and Intermediate school. The concern that I have is in regards to the 3 feet vs. 6 feet recommendation being made by the Department of Education. According to the CDC, the Department of Health and the State of Hawai‘i, it is recommended that to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus that people attempt 6 feet distancing as much as possible. Recommending 3 feet is going against these recommendations.

I have been working in the Department of Education for nearly 7 years and without fail I get the flu or the common cold during the school year. When one student gets sick, it won‘t be long before many other students also come down with the same illness. I understand that we will be attempting to help prevent the spread through the use of masks, but I have been explicitly told by my principal that he will not be enforcing the use of face masks in the classroom. Therefore, with the reduction of distance between students and the possibility that they will not be wearing face masks, I do not think that it will be safe for students in my classroom.

I truly care for my students, I often refer to the as my “kids.” I don’t want to see any of them harmed by this virus. I am aware that at many of those that see the severe complications that come with this virus are adults and elderly, but we are still learning about this virus. We can’t assume that because we aren’t seeing many severe cases involving children that there aren’t long term effects on them. I do not feel comfortable gambling with their safety and their health. If the CDC is recommending 6 feet distancing between people, why are we ignoring them and risking our children by only having 3 feet.

I hope that you will reconsider permitting 3 feet of distancing in the classroom. We need to think about our keiki and their futures, while being as safe as we can.

Mahalo Nui Loa,
Amber Waracka

Gmail

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

Social Distancing and Education

beth@willsmaui.com <beth@willsmaui.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am writing this note out of concern for our health, well-being and safety during these uncertain times.

I write not only for myself and my colleagues, but for the safety of the children I serve.

I have been an educator since 1981. During my career, I have seen and experienced many hardships.

This is, by far, the most difficult year I have had in education.

There are many issues in Hawaii Public Schools to address, but the most immediate one is the lack of

concern for everyone in the trenches directly serving our keiki.

Please return to the recommendations agreed upon, the CDC recommendations, : "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 this six feet distancing is used even for our newscasters and others, is should be absolutely considered for us.

We have been given enormous tasks to complete. The emotional, mental and physical well-being of ourselves and our keiki

must be at the forefront of any decision made with regard to reopening our schools.

Sincerely,

Beth Fobbe-Wills, Educator

Beth Fobbe-Wills

Music Coordinator, Kihei Lutheran Church

NBCT Early/Middle Childhood Music 2013

161 Iao Loop

Wailuku, HI 96793

Cell: (651) 592-0152

Gmail

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

3 ft Guidelines

KelliAnn Komatsu <kelliannkomatsu@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:40 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi there,

I am a mom with young children and am very disappointed with the 3 ft guideline. We are asked to space out 6 ft apart, even at my office. Why would my children be able to only sit 3 ft apart. I understand that there's so many thoughts going into each decision and right now is a difficult time, but I don't want to risk the health and safety of the keikis and teachers. I know classrooms are already maxed out, but I hope there can be another solution.
(Remove furniture that isn't needed to maximize classroom space, divide class in half and rotate them every other month with 2 week gaps in between to clean and ensure no germs are left or use libraries/computer rooms as an Extra classroom.) I am a working mom and understand childcare would be difficult if rotating kids, but I am for sure not able to do distance learning at home. I could barely devote any time to my children this past 4th quarter because I have to work from home.

Thank you,
KelliAnn Komatsu

Gmail

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

Maui teacher, please respect the union contract

Cynthia Van Kleef <genkigirlmaui@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:41 AM
Reply-To: Cynthia Van Kleef <genkigirlmaui@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

As a Maui teacher I'm being alerted that there has been an agreement between BOE and HSTA regarding the opening of school.

I'm writing to encourage BOE to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six fee between student desks.

I request the contract to be honored not only for the safety of all, but also because we all need to know that agreements are held up for the greater good of all and to show that government organizations are about the people and not about political agendas.

Aloha Abundance,
Cynthia Van Kleef
Iao School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michael Oyama <moyama12@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Legislature,
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.

Here's some questions for you:

Are you currently sitting 3 feet away from your colleague in legislature meetings?
Are masks NOT mandatory?
30+ people in a room?

Sound unsafe?

That's the conditions that are currently outlined for classrooms - for teachers and students!
Students and teachers are a sneeze or cough from sucking in potentially harmful droplets.

Please consider at least mandating what is recommended in the CDC guidelines.

Aloha,
Michael Oyama
Mililani Middle School Teacher

Testimony

Debbie Matthews <debbiejomatthews@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:44 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.

According to best practices, a social distancing of 6 feet and wearing of a mask to avoid sharing germs is needed. A recent publication on the corona virus cited evidence that it is transmitted in the air and remains for some time. The World Health Organization is being called upon to recognize this and revise procedures to be more effective.

In view of the above, I am alarmed that my employer, the DOE, would advocate lessening distance and limiting masks. I view it as negligent, at best, to allow staff and children to be exposed and to take that exposure home to families. At present, COVID test results are not immediate, so an infected person can spread the disease for some time prior to notification that they have the antibodies.

Our keiki are among the poorest in the state. They come from multi-cultural backgrounds where many languages are spoken and effective communication is difficult. These factors influence how readily families can be notified about and respond to the increased risk.

On personal level, I have a daughter with a compromised immune system and am the sole care giver for two disabled parents in their late 80s. Taking home this virus could be fatal for any of them. Placing me in a position where I would possibly have to quarantine from them, or perhaps lose my sole income from being quarantined, is stressful. This may be the deciding factor for my expeditious retirement, leaving the DOE with one less highly qualified teacher, with minimal notice.

It was voiced by some that our classrooms are a "bubble". I disagree. If the safety parameters are relaxed, a more fitting description would be "petrie dish". Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments. I am looking forward to your positive response in support of those relying on you.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Rowena Napeahi <rowena.napeahi@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:46 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 Rowena Napeahi and I am a teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School.

I feel the 3 feet distancing plan is too dangerous for our staff and students. There has been an increase in the number of covid cases in the Waipahu area and 3 feet distancing in the classroom could put everyone at risk. Although I would love to get back into the classroom with my students, my main concern is their safety.

Please take into consideration the safety of our keiki and school staff, 3 feet distancing just doesn't cut it for me.

Mahalo,
Rowena

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Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Claire Kawagishi <swimcoachclaire@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a special education teacher working especially with kids with severe/profound disabilities, I am very concerned with their safety and for the safety of myself and staff. Even with practice during ESY, some of my students are not yet able to put on and/or keep a face mask on. Students with disabilities may not be able to comprehend or control their behaviors to keep a safe distance from each other. There are also students who are not yet able to function without one-to-one adult assistance. Please allow special education students and their parents a choice for distance learning or face to face learning.

Thank you,
Claire Kawagishi, Ala Wai Elementary School, Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Baker <mbaker@csumb.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:49 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. In March we were considered heroes and appreciated for being able to switch from in person teaching to online teaching at a drop at a hat. Now with spikes in positive results, we are sacrificial lambs. How did we go from heroes to test subjects in the span of 4 months? Not to mention we were the first on the chopping block for a pay decrease. Hawaii shows they do not appreciate teachers.

Michelle Nauta
Mokapu Elementary School
Kalaheo H.S.

Gmail

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

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

Amy Cook <amy.aacook@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I'm writing in regards to the DOE plan to reopen schools without complying with CDC guidelines for social distancing: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. This proposal puts children at risk, it does nothing to keep them safe.

Just by spacing student desks 3 feet apart instead of the minimum 6 feet indicated by the CDC the DOE will be increasing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 between students by 800%. It's wildly irresponsible to put our educators, our keiki, and all their ohana at risk. 6 feet of space between student desks is the bare minimum. The starting point. Nothing less is acceptable.

And there are additional risk factors to review. Has the DOE even considered that air conditioners have been proven to facilitate the spread of this virus? That the DOE has been installing new air conditioners in classrooms all over the state? That August and September 2020 will likely be the hottest August and September in human history? Natural ventilation may not be an option for many of our schools, especially those on the leeward sides of the islands, as outdoor temperatures will likely be at record-breaking highs.

As a DOH employee, I and many of my colleagues worked long days, weekends, and holidays during the Dengue Fever outbreak in 2015-2016. We put ourselves at risk to help our community stay safe. We went door-to-door, eradicating mosquitoes and educating people. This virus is different, it spreads from person to person on their breath. The only way to slow it's spread is to observe social distancing rules, wear masks, and keep class sizes small (ten or fewer persons per class room).

The DOE must comply with the CDC guidelines for social distancing, masking, and reducing class sizes if they intend to proceed with returning students and teachers to their classrooms this fall. Anything less is criminally negligent.

--
Amy Cook

Testimony

Holly <hollypendergast@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:55 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion item VI(A): Presentation of Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-21 School Year.
My union and the state of Hawaii have worked to create a plan to keep me and my students as safe as can be during a pandemic. We had an agreement to space students at least 6 feet apart and for everyone to wear masks. How dare you break that agreement. Do our lives not matter to you? If you think the shut-down has been hard, just wait until Hawaii's children and teachers start dying.
Your proposed 3 foot spacing and no masks is the same as not protection at all. Please don't belittle us with this ineffective band aide approach. Either you will protect students and teachers, or not. You are failing us. Do your jobs. Be leaders. We had an agreement; honor the agreement!

Sincerely,
Holly Pendergast
3rd grade teacher
Princess Nahienaena Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

lori maihui <lmaihui@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:57 AM
To: 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 plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Lori Maihui and I am a teacher at Ala Wai Elementary School. I have been teaching for many years and am demanding that the board mandate at least 6 ft. distance between students in the classroom. If we are truly following CDC guidelines, we know that everyone, including students, should be wearing masks and distancing themselves at least 6 ft. from people outside of their household. Children, especially in grades pk-2, will not face forward for even one minute. Doctors are saying that schools need to have students attend school in shifts with small enough numbers in the classroom to keep everyone safe with at least a 6 ft. distance in place. Requiring students in grades pk-2 to return to school 100% face to face is unacceptable. Many children at this age will be asymptomatic and could be spreading the virus to those around them, taking it home to their families. I am all for reopening the schools and believe that it should be done, but with safety in mind for all parties. Packing the classrooms with students only 3 ft. apart is not putting safety first.

Please do what we all know is the right thing to do. It is not about getting all students back into the classroom at the expense of risking even one person's life. A vaccine/medicine will be in place in the near future, at which time would be a much safer time to gather students in the classroom. I miss the children dearly and am looking forward to welcoming them back when it is safe for them to do so.

Thank you,
Lori Maihui

Gmail

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

Testimony

afperez65 . <afperez65@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Freddie Perez 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 a Resource Teacher here on Maui. For the health and safety of our students, teachers, school staff, and community, please follow the CDC's guideline of maintaining 6 feet of distance in the schools. Please keep the health and safety of our educational system as the number one priority.

Sincerely,

Freddie Perez

Gmail

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

Testimony

Emmett Wong <emmett.wong@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Members of the Board of Education;

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

I support reopening schools for the coming school year to allow the students, teachers and staff the safest learning environment possible. I feel the 3 feet minimum distance betweens students isn't safe or healthy. The minimum of 6 feet should be practiced when seated in the classroom.

Although it's stated if students are facing in one direction then 3-feet is sufficient, in reality students are never just facing one direction. The 6-feet minimum separation will ensure a safer distance regardless of the seating arrangement of the desks.

I am a father of a young child of just 9 months. I also have elder parents. Since the start of the Covid19 pandemic I have taken care to minimize the risk of infection by wearing masks in public and avoiding nonessential errands. Now that school will start up in a few weeks, I wouldn't want my workplace to be a source of catching this virus and possibly contaminating my home.

Please reconsider expanding social distancing to 6 feet at all times in school, including when students are seated at their desks.

Mahalo,
Emmett Wong
Grade 6
Kalei'opu'u Elementary School

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

Testimony

Joyce Evens <joyce.evens@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE Members:

My name is Joyce Evens and I will begin my 35th year of teaching in Hawaii this fall. I, like many other teachers, desperately want to go back to school with face to face teaching with students in August. And yes, this will happen, but if the students are only three feet apart, the school will be shut down by the end of August because one or more students, teachers, and/or staff will test positive for the virus. And then after 14 days, the school reopens, and I am sure within a short period of time, it will close again because of the virus. I am also well aware, this scenario could happen with the six feet distance requirement, but the mathematics of it give us a better chance of beating it.

The initial reason, Hawaii moved to an online situation and closed the schools was for the safety of the students. Why has that philosophy been lost? Now it seems Hawaii is willing to compromise that safety so the government can announce the state of Hawaii has their students in school. This is a poor reason, and should be ashamed of this idealism. So, I emplore you, that if you perceive the idea of starting face to face classrooms is a must this fall, that all precautions are instilled to the utmost, not to the bare minimum.

Thank you.

Joyce Evens
joyce.evens@gmail.com
808.651.0843

Gmail

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

testimony

Bonnie Lum <mauilum@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:02 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.
Name: Bonita Lum
Worksite: Makawao Elementary School
The CDC has stated 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.”
However, you have chosen to ignore the Science and allow 3 ft separation of students. This is how students were situated before Covid.
I am in the high risk group as is my spouse. I feel very uncomfortable returning to school under your guidelines. I am seriously considering retiring as it is not worth it to risk my health.
I do want to continue teaching. Please reconsider your guidelines to reflect the CDC recommendation of 6 ft. separation of students and staff.
Mahalo for your time.
Regards,
Bonnie
Bonita Lum

Testimony

Una Burns <unaburns@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:04 AM

Una Burns
Teacher & registrar
WHEA PCS, 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 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. 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.

Thirty to 40 percent of our members are in high-risk categories. Advocating for social and physical distancing avoids the very real possibility of having to close all schools again, we cannot go backwards!

For the health and safety of our keiki and our fellow teachers, I am asking the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks and make face coverings mandatory.

I appreciate all the hard work the board is doing at this stressful time but please look at the big picture. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Thank you for your time and attention to this very crucial and time sensitive matter.
Una Burns

Gmail

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

3 feet is not enough

johnrvp <johnrvp@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please understand that 3ft is not enough to social distance especially without a mask indoors the science dictates that we need to be at least 6 feet apart better if we're Outdoors better if we're wearing masks it's very important I work in the high school setting in the fact that many high schools have not even looked at putting cubicles in for students so that when they sneeze that it can stay in the same area so fiberglass front and cardboard side cubicles but three feet is absolutely not enough distance between for students in a classroom without masks thank you
John
Sped teacher

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

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

Testimony

kay hammond <kayhammond884@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

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.”

———

Is opening up the schools worth it, with the possible death of just 1 child or 1 teacher?
I say “NO” to opening schools part time or full time to students and teachers. At this time, in the pandemic, the only reasonable, responsible and safe option for teaching our students is online only.
Sincerely, Kay Hammond

Sent from my iPhone

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

Joyce Nomura <jhnomura@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:04 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <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 - Joyce Nomura
School - Moanalua Elementary School

As a grandparent of an elementary school student, I am unhappy with the decisions and guidance being given by the DOE. 3 feet is not being responsible. 6 feet is a minimum distance! The students are all technologically advanced. Allow those that can tele-educate to do so and allow the kids to attend class online. Companies have been doing this for years yet the DOE can't do it? Hawaii is filled with ohana, immediate and distant. We have been confined by the rules set by the government to keep everyone safe and the state was doing well on full lock down until we opened up and now we see a spike. 6 ft minimum distance and masks at all times required. That's what the stores (Costco, Target, etc) do...why can't we do it for our youth! I am old and want to spend as much time as I can with my grandkids. Putting them at risk puts us (the grandparents) at risk. Please...please...think about the state's future (both youth and adult) and require 6 ft distancing and masks.

Gmail

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

Testimony on school opening

Scott Clarke <sclarke@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Scott Clarke and I am a teacher at H.P. Baldwin High School. I am requesting that the Hawai'i Department of Education adopt a policy of at least 6 feet of social distancing in classrooms and a mandatory requirement for all staff and students to wear face masks. As cases of Covid-19 continue to increase around the country and Hawai'i opens to mainland and international travelers, it is essential for the DOE to follow stringent precautionary measures to ensure the safety of students, staff, and our families.

Sincerely,
Scott Clarke
H.P. Baldwin High School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nicole Ogata <naogata87@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE and HIDOE,
This year marks the start of my tenth year in teaching for the HIDOE. While I have been a proud and dedicated member to this profession, our current state is extremely troublesome. In 2019, I was diagnosed with cancer, I quickly had it removed and returned to work 3 weeks after my surgery. I wanted to get back into my classroom and be there for my students. I couldn't stand not ending the school year with them and showing them that despite life's challenges, they can always make it through with a little strength, perseverance, and support. They supported me, sending me messages of inspiration and genuine love.

Therefore, today I want to show them the same and say that three feet is unacceptable. I need to show my students love and support, and by allowing this to happen would go against everything I stand for as an educator. Teachers and schools have strived to take care of students, academically, mentally, and emotionally. Why now are we neglecting their health?

I want to continue to stay in the classroom and interact with my students, but why are we going to risk their safety, as well as ours, for a couple of feet? This is a blatantly irresponsible move on the part of the Board of Education, Department of Education, and Department of Health. It is clear that the health and safety of those that they serve is meaningless. Gambling is illegal in the state of Hawaii, so let's not gamble with our lives.

Many teachers are already sacrificing ourselves and our families for the betterment of the state and these children, protect us! We deserve at least that. Knowing I am potentially at higher risk, I am returning to the classroom without a second thought. I know that this will also keep me from properly caring for my mother who is at high risk, and seeing my young nephews. My family is sacrificing a lot for me to return to work and for our state's children.
The BOE, HIDOE and DOH can at least do the bare minimum and enforce the 6 feet guideline that the CDC has laid out for the country.

Mahalo for your time,
Nicole Ogata

Testimony

Amy Ogasawara <amyeof@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:08 AM
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.

Amy Ogasawara, M.Ed.
Kaimuki Middle School
Student Services Coordinator
Parent of a public school graduate

To the Members of the Board of Education:

This testimony is in regards to the Hawaii DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. As a public school educator for the past 28 years, I am again disappointed with the HIDOE's total lack of regard for the HSTA's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). What is the purpose of developing a MOU if HIDOE does not honor the contents of the agreement?

As you are aware, the residents of Oahu need to be six feet apart whenever in public such as in banks, restaurants, and grocery stores. Why is it that HIDOE has determined that students and adults can be three feet apart instead of six feet?

We need to work smarter, not harder. Please read about the current COVID-19 situation in Texas preschools. Can we not learn from others? Does the HIDOE always have to be reactive instead of proactive? It appears that HIDOE only responds quickly to lawsuits. Does HIDOE really want another lawsuit after students become infected with the COVID-19 virus?

https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/

As a 12 month teacher, I have requested to work from home for part of each week. There are still staff members who do not wear masks or wear masks under their chins which is not the most effective practice. I have purchased plexiglass sneeze guards and face shields with my personal money because I cannot wait for my school to purchase these items for me. I resumed testing students, so the sneeze guard was very effective so that the student and I did not need to wear masks. We could see and hear each other in a safe manner.

Yesterday, Dr. Kishimoto made a reference to the American Academy of Pediatrics guidance for physical distancing during an interview with a local news station. This is an excerpt from the AAP's guidance:

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 many school settings, 6 feet between students is not feasible without limiting the number of students. 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. Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-feet spacing rule between students with the potential downside if remote learning is the only alternative."

It appears that Dr. Kishimoto has misinterpreted the AAP's guidance as the HIDOE's *"Guidance for Reopening School" states "Face coverings must be worn when outside the classroom, especially when physical distancing is difficult."*

Please discuss these issues with HIDOE.

By the way, you might also mention to the governor that if teachers and educational officers experience pay cuts of more than 10%, a large number of us will retire within the next two months. That's right, not in December or June 2021, but as soon as possible. This will result in a greater shortage of teachers and staff than is typically experienced each school year. But, perhaps this is not a concern to HIDOE.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my testimony.
Amy Ogasawara

Gmail

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

Testimony from a parent of a student at Keaau Middle School

David Mikesell <davidmikesell808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. My name is David Mikesell. My son is a student at Keaau Middle School. And my partner of 13 years is a teacher at the same school. The school districts plan to have students and teachers return to campuses is unacceptable. Our multi generational family will be put at risk of being exposed to coronavirus if this plan is implemented. We care for two elderly family members who are high risk and I too am at high risk of serious life threatening outcomes if infected. Three feet of separation is not a recommendation of any health organization. And now new studies show it may be airborne. There is no way this plan will be safe for anyone in our community. Please consider postponing the start of the school year until a better plan is agreed upon. Don't send my son and my partner back to school knowing that is it likely they will be infected some time this school year. Thanks for your time and consideration.
David Mikesell.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Melissa Moriguchi <mmoriguchi1@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:09 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 2020-21 school year.
I would like the state (BOE) to honor the contractual agreement and have the classrooms configured with 6 ft. distance between student desks.
As a teacher, I am feeling anxiety and stress as the new school approaches. With the number of Covid cases growing each day, it is imperative that we take preventive action so we can keep everyone in school. Please consider my request.

Thank you,
Melissa Moriguchi
Teacher
Wahiawa Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Leilani <decourcyl@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:11 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education Members:

I am writing in regards to **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.**

I am writing as the sister of a first grade teacher at Kaunakakai Elementary School, the aunt of 2 students there and a student at Molokai Middle School. I am also writing as the daughter of elderly parents, one of whom is suffering from dementia and the other recovering from cancer, who also live on Molokai and for whom partially cares as my sister because she checks their mail, does their grocery shopping and more days than not, makes their meals.

Let me also preface my statements by the fact that I am a proud product of both schools I mention above and a graduate of Molokai High School. I have always been and continue to be a huge proponent of the public school system in Hawaii. I went to Brown University from Molokai High and on to George Washington University where I obtained a joint degree in law and public health (JD/MPH). I have been doing alumni interviews for Brown for 20+ years, the last decade or so asking that I only be assigned students from neighbor island public schools, as a commitment to students like me who don't always have the same access to information regarding schools like Brown or GWU. This year I did 7. 3 got in. I also annually return to Molokai High to speak at their Future Fest, a college and career fair at which they try to let students see the options they have. So, I am familiar with public schools, am an attorney, and have experience in public health and health policy. This is not a knee jerk reaction to the DOE's asinine plan to not require 6 feet of distance or masks when schools resume in person instruction next month.

While preliminary evidence demonstrates children do not become as severely ill as adults, in particular older adults, they can and do become ill. Covid19 is a disease that has been around for less than a year, and realistically has only been researched for about 6 months. There are many unknowns involved in the disease, not to mention the fact our knowledge is constantly evolving. At the same time, the virus itself has been mutating, making the most recent common mutation more contagious that it originally was.

You have a convergence of events that will be occurring. School starts at the same time tourism reopens. While a negative Covid19 test 72 hours before departure will cull any positives from coming and quarantining for 14 days, that still leaves many people who may have been exposed and have yet to become infectious, able to come to Hawaii and infect people with whom they come in contact. The vast majority of these contacts will be in service industry jobs, in particular in the hospitality industry. We have already seen an alarming increase in the incident rate since partial reopening at the start of June. We have gone from days with literally no cases to cases in the upper 20s almost each day in the past 2 weeks. The math would indicate this jump in cases will exponentially grow when tourism resumes. Why does it matter that school resumes at the same time? Because many of the public school students live in multigenerational homes in which multiple of members of the household hold one or more jobs in the hospitality industry. We have already seen clusters occurring in multigenerational households, including children. Contact tracing has shown this, and demonstrates that many people within the clusters may be mildly ill or asymptomatic, but they can still transmit the virus. Including children. Before they are aware that they are ill. Multigenerational homes in which the most vulnerable populations also reside, the elderly. It takes one child getting Covid19 and infecting a teacher, who then takes it home to their family, including the elderly; or infecting another child who takes it home and takes it home to their grandparents, and you will have tragic consequences on your hands. All because of a difference of opinion on social distancing and the use of masks. But only as it applies at public schools.

The CDC recommends the use of face masks and 6 foot social distancing. They have no different recommendation for children, unless they are under 2. Not only that, but the glaring inconsistency in light of Mayor Caldwell issuing a new order requiring the use of face masks in all public areas, including offices unless you have an office to yourself, and being signed off on by Governor Ige, would indicate that somehow all other workers working in close proximity of 6 feet or less will be legally required (as in they can be FINED for noncompliance) to wear masks at all times, but teachers will not be able to do so, flies in direct contradiction of every member of this Board who states that teachers are valued members of our community. Your own DOH page states: Children and young adults are more likely to spread COVID-19 to older individuals and those with chronic diseases than to suffer themselves from complications of COVID-19, it's important we educate our keiki to keep others in our community safe.

In is universally acknowledged that respiratory droplets are the primary means of transmission. Hence the 6 foot distancing guidelines. The news is replete with experts (more than 240) urging that the airborne transmission nature of the virus be recognized by the CDC- in other words, aerosolized droplets. They advocate the use of preventive measures, which in addition to the use of masks would include sufficient and effective ventilation by supplying clean outdoor air and minimizing recirculating air in public buildings, offices, schools, hospitals and nursing homes and avoiding overcrowding in buildings. Every day we learn more about the transmission of this virus. When we are cognizant of the fact that face masks and social distancing work and have already saved countless lives, why would you put the lives of teachers, students, and their extended families at risk? Teachers are willing and able to work, they are only asking that they be allowed to work as safely as all other working people are compelled to work currently.

The fact that I cannot enter a store without someone making me sanitize my hands and cannot go home to Molokai without having my temperature taken, demonstrates that others take the risk of transmission seriously. I know I took it seriously when I would not allow myself to go home and quarantine for nearly 4 months and I haven't hugged either of my parents since January because I don't want to take the risk that I may infect them. Even going home at all still has me concerned that I may be an asymptomatic vector of the disease. But I wear my mask, fog up my eyeglasses, hand sanitize until my hands almost peel, and maintain social distancing in order to keep them as safe as I can. Shouldn't the DOE and BOE do the same?

Anecdotally, I have friends who are physicians in various states across the nation. Some of whom have had their own children fall ill from Covid19 - likely from exposure at school. The Washington Post yesterday (7/6/2020) reported: Though largely considered less vulnerable, young children have shown susceptibility as people try to return to their normal routines. The Texas Department of Health and Human Services reported Monday that at least 1,335 people have tested positive at child-care facilities, and about a third of the cases were children**.** (emphasis added.) Yesterday, the Mayor of Atlanta tested positive with no symptoms. I know several people in Hawaii who are now planning on homeschooling their children instead of exposing them to the risk they now feel they will be subjected to in the classroom. This all combines to demonstrate why this 3 foot distancing and no face masks runs contrary to the known risk factors and preventive measures.

It appears the mentality of the DOE is that teachers are babysitters, and that that collective agreement and agreement entered into regarding safely returning to school is meaningless. My sister has taught at Kaunakakai School for 19 years, through the birth of all 3 of her children who have also attended the school, and while obtaining her Ph.D in elementary education. All she, and the other teachers ask, is that be allowed to return to work safely, in accordance with the CDC Guidelines, the City and County Honolulu requirements, the agreement the State just ENTERED into with HSTA, and with continuing and evolving information demonstrating children are more susceptible than originally thought, and the certain knowledge that the social distancing and face masking is effective in prevention. The DOE is basically opening the doors to workers' compensation cases, potential litigation by the HSTA, and clearly demonstrating the lack of value they place on their teachers, students and their families, with the full knowledge that 60% of families want online learning to continue. Why on earth would the DOE recommend 3 feet of distancing and no face masks in the light of all of this. It is nonsensical and almost cruel to the teachers who work with little thanks and a lot of personal investment, both of time and money.

Sincerely,

Leilani DeCourcy

Gmail

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

Testimony

Marisa S <msakoeki@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE:

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 Marisa Toyooka, and my child attends Mililani Uka Elementary School. I am also an educator with the DOE.

As a parent and educator I believe that it is imperative that we follow the CDC's recommendation for schools to space seating/desks 6 feet apart to reduce the risk of COVID spread. I also feel that it is equally important that the BOE require students and teachers to wear masks in all places. If the mayor has mandated masks in all indoor public spaces, our students and staff should also be wearing them for the safety of all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

- Marisa Toyooka, Parent/Educator

Gmail

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

Testimony

Meghan Chin <meghan.chin@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:13 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning!

My name is Meghan and I am a Behavioral Health Specialist in the Central District, in the AMR area (Aiea, Moanalua, Radford).

I do understand that COVID is here to stay at the moment and we cannot expect 0 cases to return to school. However, I am concerned about returning to school with much larger groups of people in a smaller area. We have had "social distancing" and "wear a mask" drilled into our head for the last five months and now the DOE is asking us to "social distance" at 3 feet and not wear a mask with younger children. I understand that younger children do need language development, but this is also the population that does not fully understand hygiene and spreading germs.
I also find it odd that the principals are determining how we will be returning to school this week, but we haven't had an opportunity to bargain our safety concerns yet. Teachers have gone in and negotiated their terms for a safer return to school.
That also brings me to my next point. It is my understanding that teachers demanded 6 ft of social distancing space between students, no exception. However, Superintendent Matayoshi said on the news that we are going to do 3 ft if all students are facing forward? This was not the agreement? I would like our agreement to echo the teacher's of 6 ft between students. This would make me more comfortable, but also keep things consistent.
My next concern is cleanliness. I understand that it is not the teacher's job, nor ours to clean our work spaces. Of course, I will be because I want to make sure that I can clean between each student, but how will our poor janitors keep up with an increase in work demand, but no extra help? I adore our janitors and they really do keep our schools running, but I know they are busy daily with their regular work duties, how will they be able to clean heavily trafficked areas multiple times a day plus deep cleaning of the classrooms?
I am also concerned about the availability of PPE and cleaning supplies. The teacher's will be reimbursed for cleaning supplies and PPE they purchase and use for work. Will we be offered the same agreement?
I am also concerned about how large of a group will each teacher be responsible for. I understand it depends on how much social distancing can be adhered too, but I am nervous if groups will be 10+ per teacher, especially with the younger grades.

I really think my concern is returning to school in large groups, especially with limited use of PPE. In my job, it is not unusual to be bitten, spit on, coughed on, sneezed on or touched. I know we must do our best and must somehow return to school, but I'm just expressing my concerns with returning. I really don't know what is the solution or "best practice" but I am concerned about catching COVID and spreading it not just to other students, but elderly or immunocompromised people in my family and friends.

Thank you so much for listening to my concerns and fighting for our work rights every day. Your time and efforts are appreciated.

Meghan Chin, M.A.
Behavioral Health Specialist
Aiea Elementary School
(808) 483-7200 ext. 3054453
Webling Elementary School
(808) 483-7240 ext. 259

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Gmail

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

Testimony re: Opening of Schools

Jo Mastin <jo.mastin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:14 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, my name is Jo Ann Mastin. I am a parent of two children who attend Palisades Elementary School, and I am also a teacher at James Campbell High School.

In less than a month, my colleagues and I will be asked to return to the classroom. And, I think most of us are glad to do so provided we have the support to ensure a safe and productive environment for all those in attendance.

I am lucky that I do not have any underlying medical issues that prevent me from wearing a cloth mask for hours at a time; I did this yesterday as I distributed yearbooks from 8 to 3. I wore my mask while moving heavy boxes of yearbooks. I did have to take in some air in between, but otherwise, I was fine. I know others who won't be. I am not sure how I will provide verbal instruction this Fall as it is difficult to be heard while wearing masks; I am thinking of investing in a speaker and microphone set-up (another item not funded by my school).

My children have been wearing masks whenever we've gone out and about. They are in training. They forget that they cannot touch their masks. And, these are short field trips out so they aren't in their masks the whole day. My concern, as a parent, is the amount of exposure children will have while they are in classrooms. I think they should wear masks while in confined spaces, but should be able to go outside, weather permitting, without masks if they are properly socially distanced. Their teachers, as far as I know, won't be equipped to determine if any of the children are sick, because like me, they won't have a thermometer unless they buy one out of their own pockets or have proper medical training to determine the likelihood of illness. Like me, they can suggest that the students wear masks but what consequences will there be if the students don't?

Frankly, I feel the most stress when I think about what I have to do to help my students return back to school so that their parents can return to work while navigating what will happen to my children if they have schedules that require them to do remote learning and I can't be home.

I don't know what the BOE can do to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and our teachers while helping our community get back on its feet economically. I don't think there's an easy or neat solution. I don't know opening in August with the hope that everything will "work itself out" is necessarily a good idea either.

Perhaps we should just throw the old structures of education out the window and be more flexible with what instruction looks like, what the role of teachers look like. We should examine what our students can get out of sitting in classrooms with rows and columns three- to six-feet apart.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jo Ann Mastin
Parent and Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

gerry K <grryk@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Superintendent Kishimoto:

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 all of our safety, please adhere to CDC guidelines when opening school to face to face learning. The guidelines recommend that people maintain six feet distance and wear a mask - especially when indoors.

We all want school to reopen in August and remain open. We all want to be safe there.

Afterall, what good will reopening schools in August just to have them close down again because of corona virus outbreaks?

Sincerely,

Gerald Kalisik
Teacher
Waiakeawaena Elementary School

Testimony

Danielle Hartwick <daniurban@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:17 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am writing in response to the 3 foot rule in school. I am a preschool SPED teacher and although my students will have a very difficult time with keeping their distance, I am writing on behalf of my fellow teachers. We all want our students in school and for life to go back to normal. However, the DOE guidance for 3 feet versus 6 feet is a contradiction to what we are telling the public for safety practices. The state tells businesses to open at 50% capacity yet we aren't making that recommendation to schools. The state tells businesses to distance shoppers in line to 6ft distance and not 3 ft although we are all facing the same direction. I am concerned this reduction is distance guidance is putting our teachers, students and in turn their families at risk at the same time our community is opening back up to travelers. We do not know what the results will be in August and therefore, should not be relaxing our policies until we have data. If there is a potential new risk introduced, then school opening should be delayed until we have better information. Otherwise, we should be proceeding with the same recommendations/policies the state is using for other public entities. Now is the time to proceed cautiously without increasing our risk to the community. Please reconsider this guidance. Mahalo, Danielle Hartwick

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Alyssa Griffin <alyssakmgriffin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Alyssa Griffin 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 first grade teacher at Holomua Elementary School and my daughter will be starting Kindergarten in August. As both a teacher and parent I do not feel comfortable being in the classroom or sending my child into a classroom that is not properly following social distance guidelines that are expected of the rest of the public in other places similar to that of a classroom (such as, gyms and restaurants). If we expect our community members to follow strict "6-feet apart" guidelines why should it be any different for our keiki? Having students sit 3-feet apart and expecting them to stay facing the same direction for hours through the day is ridiculous and impossible. Not only will young students struggle to do this but teachers will be responsible for CONSTANTLY interrupting their lessons to make sure the students never turn in their seats. In addition to supporting our students/children's mental and emotional needs after having not been in a classroom setting since March we will also have to drop the hammer and not allow them to turn in their seats if they are only sitting 3 feet apart.

If this will be the case, full distance learning should be back on the table.

Aloha and Mahalo for your time,
Alyssa Griffin

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristin A <kris_yellow72@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:22 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.

Students should be spaced 6 feet not 3 feet away for safety of students and teachers as well! We want what's best for our students as well as for us as well!

Thank you!

Kristin Au, Kapolei Elem, 3rd grade teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Samoana M. <samoana83@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:22 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. I am a grade 4 HIDOE teacher from the Campbell-Kapolei district, Keoneula Elementary School, urging HIDOE to follow the 6ft social distancing guidelines provided by the CDC and agreed upon by HSTA and the BOE.

I want schools to remain open as much as possible to be able to teach the keiki, however, we need to be safe and proceed with caution. I do not want schools to have to re-close and continue a full distance learning model again.

I urge HIDOE to mandate a 6ft social distancing space and use of masks as informed by the CDC and our HI government. How can a 3ft rule be suggested for schools but 6ft is still urged in other public spaces? That doesn't make sense.

Also, I am concerned by the 3ft social distancing rule because our school has air conditioning and proper air ventilation has not been addressed yet. So far, our administration has said that we are not allowed to leave our doors open because that can break the AC system. So, if a 3ft rule is mandated, admin can put more students into the class, but there is no proper ventilation.

Please reconsider the 3ft social distancing + no masks acception to 6ft of social distancing and use of masks as appropriate.

Mahalo for your time,
Samoana McAngus

--
Samoana M.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY re: reopening of schools

Haley A. Ku‘uipo Bufil Agbayani <hakbufil@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:22 AM

To the Hawai‘i Board of Education:

My name is Haley Agbayani and I have just completed my seventh year of teaching with the Hawai‘i State Department of Education. I am currently a third grade teacher, but have also taught in grades K, 2, and 4. My first three years of teaching were done at Mountain View Elementary. I now work at Pāhoa Elementary School (PES) and unless something comes up that forces me to transfer elsewhere, I am in it for the long haul at PES. I work amongst some of the most resilient students and colleagues in the Kea‘au-Ka‘ū-Pāhoa Complex Area, as we have endured and continue to persevere a multitude of life-changing and trauma-inducing events: Hurricane/Tropical Storm Iselle, lava flow 2014, Hurricane Lane, the Leilani lava flow of 2018, and now, COVID-19. I am also a proud product of our public education system and graduate and alumni of Hilo High School, as well as a proud alumni of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana‘ole Elementary and Intermediate School in Pāpa‘ikou.

I am writing this testimony to ask you to reconsider suggested guidelines for 3-foot distancing in the classroom. While the AAP suggests a 3 feet approach in schools or 6 feet when feasible (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=IwAR2IxaFkJnY0g_n8Zvp8HxVwlt6sXrD_H38IESO05V2NZZXus-t9VCGLijg) and CDC suggests 6 feet when possible (pp. 39-40: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf); no where in the CDC response document does it state that 3 feet is suggested nor suitable for the school environment. Let’s be cautious and revise the HIDOE plan to use 6-foot distancing or two arms length as already agreed upon in the MOU signed on 6/26/2020.

I am also writing this testimony to ask you to utilize the guidance that was sent out to the public on April 7th with regard to reopening after long term school closure. I have inserted the April 7th and the April 30th

versions of this guidance.

Updated 04/07/2020

Reopening of Schools

Reopening Schools After a Prolonged School Closure

"While we have data that can contribute to decisions about when to dismiss schools, there is almost no available data on the right time to re-start schools. We would advise to plan for a length of time and then evaluate based on continued community spread." - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Considerations for School Closure guidance.

For more CDC guidance, click here.

The HIDOE will plan for the reopening of the schools based on the following:

1. **There is no recent evidence of community spread.**
    a. No new cases for 4 weeks (2 incubation periods of the virus) on the island.
    b. Availability of workforce is sufficient for reopening each school.
    c. If need to stagger the reopening of schools, the HIDOE will follow the County's lead.
2. **HIDOE follows the CDC Mitigation Recommendations (LINK)- Table 2, by backward mapping the actions for school closure for establishing procedures for reopening school.**
    a. Assess local factors in the community and the health issues in the school (e.g., student and staff) that need to be considered in opening school and creating mitigation procedures in the school.
    b. Establish and communicate mitigation procedures, responsibility for procedures, and monitoring system for quality assurance. Procedures may include frequent cleaning of common areas, temperature checks, healthroom procedures, etc.
    c. Prior to re-opening facilities, clean facilities and prepare key services and programming in order to receive students.
    d. Create a staggered schedule for re-establishing extra-curricular programs, visitors on campus, etc.
3. **Reopening of school facilities will allow for prioritizing services needed for vulnerable learners and address the temporary need for social distancing, therefore may not necessarily provide a comprehensive school program immediately.**
    a. Title I schools and other schools with high ALICE family populations.
    b. Schedule provisions for related services for children with disabilities, homeless, medically fragile, etc.
    c. May include staggered start and end times, modified attendance, and/or a combination of distance learning and physical presence at school.

Official Summer School Information

BOE Policy 500-18: Summer School Programs

Summer school provides an extended learning opportunity for students to have additional time and/or differentiated learning opportunities to demonstrate academic proficiency, foster innovation and creativity, and challenge students to achieve beyond the minimum requirements for graduation.

Schools who have already submitted a Site Notification Form for Summer 2020 should make every reasonable effort to offer a summer school program.

Summer School Registration

- Schools can proceed with registration through mail or electronic means (i.e. online form, email, etc.).
- If the registration date was affected by the school closure, schools should update this information by:

Updated 04/30/2020

Reopening of Schools

Reopening Schools After a Prolonged School Closure

This section will be updated by April 21, 2020.

Official Summer School Information

BOE Policy 500-18: Summer School Programs

Summer school provides an extended learning opportunity for students to have additional time and/or differentiated learning opportunities to demonstrate academic proficiency, foster innovation and creativity, and challenge students to achieve beyond the minimum requirements for graduation.

Schools who have already submitted a Site Notification Form for Summer 2020 should make every reasonable effort to offer a summer school program.

Summer School Registration

- Schools can proceed with registration through mail or electronic means (i.e. online form, email, etc.).
- If the registration date was affected by the school closure, schools should update this information by:
  - Sending an email to Christy Sato, educational specialist, at summerschool@k12.hi.us and their District Coordinator.
  - Providing notification to parents/caregivers via school website and other school communication methods.
- Payment Collection
  - Schools should make every reasonable effort to batch and deposit summer school collections by the next business day (Guidelines and Procedures, pg. 40).
  - If there are changes to deposit timelines because of current circumstances, schools must clearly state this during the registration process. This will help families with financial planning and prevent insufficient fund situations.

Summer School Staffing

- Schools should proceed with securing staff for summer school based on previous year(s) enrollment data.
- Prospective staff should be made aware of all school contingency plans.
- Summer School accounts, Prog ID: 16350, will continue to be evaluated at the end of summer but current circumstances will be taken into account if deficits occur.

Summer School Schedule

- At this time, the HIDOE has not determined its 2020 summer school program due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information forthcoming.
- At this time, the total instructional hour requirements remain the same:
  - For grades 7 through 12, credit courses remain 120 hours for each full credit or unit and 60 hours for .5 or ½ credit or unit.
  - Elementary programs and non-credit middle/intermediate and high school programs can run for less than 120 hours.

Distance Learning Plans

- Schools should consider their current distance learning plans when planning for their summer school program. This will allow schools the most flexibility to offer summer learning opportunities to students.

For additional information contact Christy Sato, educational specialist, at

To this date, we have not received updated guidance on reopening as stated in the April 30th version; however, the HIDOE has put out their Health & Safety Handbook. Does this document replace those sent

out on 4/7 and 4/30? Are we able to use the guidance listed in the document put out on April 7th based on school needs? While it is my understanding that this document was created for the 2019-2020 school year, could we not use the same or similar guidance going forward?

Please, give us hope, act with kindness, and work towards togetherness by both adjusting the guidelines for distancing to the CDC-recommended 6-foot space as agreed upon in the MOU and considering utilizing guidance that was sent out to the public on April 7th with regard to reopening after long term school closure. Please err on the side of caution when considering your plans to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Help us thrive, survive, and live!

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

Haley Agbayani, M. Ed.
Pāhoa Elementary School, Grade 3 Teacher
7-year Hawaiʻi Public School Educator
Proud HSTA Member and School & Chapter Level Leader

--
Haley Ann Ku'uipo (Bufil) Agbayani, M.Ed.
808-315-0102, hakbufil@gmail.com, HC 1 Box 4069, Keaʻau, HI 96749

- 3rd Grade, P-18, Pāhoa Elementary School, Pāhoa, Hawaiʻi
- SLL HSTA Grievance Representative, Pāhoa Elementary School, 2019-2021

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

Testimony

Alison Higa <alisonchiga@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Sheri Yoshikawa <dustirose01@gmail.com>, Kari Stagno <kari.stagno@gmail.com>, Daniel Taira <danielctaira@gmail.com>

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 Alison Yee and I am a 5th grade teacher at Lehua Elementary school.
I am against the 3ft rule, which puts us all at risk. 6ft is what I'm comfortable with as I have a baby and family at home who is counting on me to remain healthy.

Gmail

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

Reopening Schools

Ahlayn Labuanan <ahlaynlabuanan@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher at Pomaika'i Elementary School and teach first grade. Our school is moving ahead with Model A. I am sickened with the way and amount of time teachers were given to vote on this matter. I am also sickened with the fact that students are not being forced to wear masks and will be sitting only 3 feet away from each other. The recommendation given by the CDC which was agreed upon by the state and HSTA said, "!Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 by maintaining six feet or two arms' length(whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible." You are not thinking of students or teachers and are putting all of us at risk of possibly catching COvID-19 by allowing only 3feet of distancing. Please rethink the 3 feet distance and go back to the 6 feet distance to keep everyone safe!

Gmail

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

Testimony on covid and schools

Karisa Figueira <karisafigueira@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:25 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am an 18 year veteran teacher in the DOE and I am strongly urging you all to please consider changing the protocol for school dot reopen to ensure that children most have a 6 foot distance between them and the teacher and all children should wear masks.
If we do not start off with a strong health plan we will end up with a COVID spread and will be out of school and doing only distance learning for the entire school year. Please be proactive and not reactive. Start off with appropriate guidelines to ensure we are all safe.
Mahalo,
Karisa Figueira

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shana Takiguchi <s_takiguchi59@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I, Shana Arakaki, a teacher at King Kaumuali'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 believe with the current rise in cases and the need to nip this Covid situation sooner than later we must follow the CDC guidelines of wearing our masks and adhere to the 6ft spacing. As things move forward, then we can assess the situation and make necessary changes.

Thank you,
Shana
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Reopening Schools

Rachel Wagner <rachelkwagner23@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Rachel Wagner and I am a First Grade Teacher at Barbers Point Elementary 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.

Rachel Wagner

Gmail

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

6ft distancing and less students in classes

Doris Boushey <deenbee@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:28 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
As an educator in our state and someone who cares about our students getting back to some sort of normalcy, we need our students back to school ASAP but we need to do this safely. We are asking for students Desks to be 6ft apart And facing forward. These are hard times for us all. We don't want students getting the virus and spreading it to their parents and families! The superintendent needs a wake up call of she tjinsj 3ft is ok. We want our Keiki safe and in their classrooms with less students also. I advocate and back up HGEA and HSTA for safety in our classrooms! We need to open up and do things safely to contain this virus. We all want our students to get the optimal learning by working in collaboration with each other like how it was before but we need to do this gradually and in time it can be done. We appreciate your consideration.
Much Mahalo!
Aloha,
Doris Boushey
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sandy Domion <sandydomion@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:28 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. My name is Sandy Domion, a librarian at Maemae Elementary School.

I object to the three feet rule in the classroom, especially without face coverings. As the librarian, I will be exposed to all the students. Kids sneeze, cough, and wipe their bodily fluids on surfaces and people all the time. Research has shown that droplets spread farther than three feet without any face coverings. I also work a second job as an essential worker at a grocery store where we have shut down lanes because the customers would be closer than six feet in distance. I don't understand how the safety of teachers and students are not important enough to warrant an extra three feet.

My own children will be returning to school in the fall and their school has come up with a comprehensive plan to distance 6 feet in the classroom.

I definitely do not feel safe returning to the classroom. I have an elderly parent who lives with me and I have an auto-immune disease. At my second job, there are protocols and procedures in place where I feel safe. Temperature checks, six-feet and masks are required, why aren't they required in public schools?

Please put the health and safety of our entire community first!

Sincerely
Sandy Domion

Gmail

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

testimony

Meghan Chin <meghan.chin@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sorry, had another concern come up.

If there is a shortage of PPE and the employer in unable to provide PPE to us, will we be forced to work without? Or how will the employer look out for the safety of employees?

Meghan Chin, M.A.
Behavioral Health Specialist
Aiea Elementary School
(808) 483-7200 ext. 3054453
Webling Elementary School
(808) 483-7240 ext. 259

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

Testimony

Alison Higa <alisonchiga@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'd also like to add that students should also be required to wear masks, spacing 6 feet apart for the safety of all. Safety should be priority #1.
Alison Yee
Lehua Elementary
5th grade teacher

Testimony

Juanita Mayeda <nittalele007@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:30 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.

I'm a 7th grade teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School. My son attends here as well. My daughter attends Kamehameha School which, along with many other private schools, have solid and safe plans for the children as well as the teachers. I wish the DOE had that for us.

I signed up to teach to educate the children of Hawaii about 15 years ago, not to be a babysitter. I also did not sign up to be a frontline worker such as a nurse or doctor, so to ask us to return for the first quarter is just asking for trouble.

On top of that, I am concerned that our schools have been approved for us to go back and only have to separate the student desks at a minimum 3 feet. It is already a challenge to keep classroom management at this grade level but now to ask them to only face forward but stay faced forward when spaced three feet apart is ludicrous! They are social beings especially at this age. So now on top of babysitter, partial educator, mask and ID police, cleaner monitor, we will have the unnecessary task of ensuring they stay faced forward during the 70 minute block!?! There are many other tasks teachers will he asked do this upcoming school year as we play babysitter, and not teacher (for the first time in 15 years). I beg you to at least keep everyone safe while we temporarily play this role I did not sign up for. Please reconsider mandating the 6 feet in all spaces in our schools.

Thank you

Juanita Mayeda

Gmail

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

3 ft vs 6f

Charlotte Menze <charlotte.menze@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:31 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Hello I am writing to give my testimony about 3 feet versus 6 feet distance for children and teachers and other staff. This is against the CDC guidelines and I don't understand why it's safe for children and teachers to go to school when a disease can reach up to 30 feet. Please help to keep our students teachers and staff safe. I am writing because I am scared for my life and my students to go to school. We have students that are five years old with pre-existing conditions they could potentially put their lives at great risk. By not giving these children a safe place to go to school you were seeing kids with pre-existing conditions don't deserve an education. It's not fair that some good to go and others do not have the health which is not their choice to attend school and get their education. Please reconsider the 3 feet and make sure it's safe for all of our students to go to school.

Charlotte Menze

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

Schools are NOT SAFE for opening on August 4th

Diana Wan <dianawan21@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:32 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear, BOE,

The current circumstance showing Hawaii's increased community spread and lack of public compliance with mask wearing and social distancing is really concerning. We should be pooling our energies into advocating for the case that it is NOT SAFE to return to schools August 4th. Hawaii does not have the situation under control and it is showing.

Mahalo,
Diana

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

NO MASKS!

Jenna A <jma33712@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:33 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi I am a teacher from the central district. We should not be required to wear masks. It is incredibly restrictive and hard to breath when wearing one. It is difficult to hear when someone is wearing a mask. I work with special ed students and there already are so many challenges. It will be even more difficult to communicate if I am wearing a mask. If we are keeping the appropriate 3ft distance, I do not see how it is necessary to wear masks as well. Please take this into consideration. Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Donna Hallock <dhallock53@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:33 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I am an ELL teacher on the island of Hawaii. I firmly believe it is too early to open schools.
The issue is not 3 ft or 6ft, the issue is that it will be impossible to teach in either of those situations. Putting children on busses, in cafeterias, on playgrounds is DANGEROUS and should not even be considered yet!

Gmail

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

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A)

John Bonewitz <john.bonewitz@keaau.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am a science teacher at Kea'au High School on Hawai'i Island. I am gravely concerned with Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. The DOE attempt to implement a 3 foot distancing requirement contrary to the CDC's guidelines is absolutely unacceptable and negligent. This is also in direct disregard for the MOU between the DOE and HSTA.

I am also concerned that the DOE is not standing firm on making masks required. If the grocery store can require masks, why can't schools?

As a younger teacher who cares for a kupuna who is 85 years old, I am very concerned that my duties as a teacher are going to put him at risk. I am certain that this decision more than any other is going to cause us to have to reclose schools again when the COVID-19 numbers inevitably begin to rise. I am also concerned for our teachers who are at high risk. We are already facing a teacher shortage crisis, this plan will further exacerbate this when those teachers are forced to retire early.

I believe that the DOE is succumbing to pressure to stimulate the economy without regard for the health and safety of students, teachers and the people of Hawai'i. This has become an issue of equity as colleges and private schools are maintaining much more strict requirements and social distancing requirements and enacting more online learning solutions.

When teachers and kupuna begin to die from COVID-19 (74 staff in NYC schools have died due to COVID) their blood will be on your hands. Please make the right decisions now when they will have the most impact.

John Bonewitz
Physics Teacher
Kea'au High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sharnell Mora <sharnell.mora@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:34 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

As an educator and parent, I am quite concerned with a 3 feet, social-distancing plan. Studies have shown that a mask and 6 feet distancing are helping to prevent our current pandemic. Enclosing thousands of people in public schools, without proper safety precautions can lead to the diminished health of our keiki, kupuna, and district employees, who will be at risk of exposure on an exponential level.

Please take the time needed to create a plan in-line with medical and scientific guidelines for the protection of our island and communities. The education of our children is extremely important, but the health of our community takes precedence during such a volatile time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sharnell Mora
--
Sharnell Mora
English/IBAD
Pearl City High School

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

Testimony

paul stader <paulstader@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:37 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Dr. Paul G. Stader and I am a social studies teacher at Wahiawa Middle School. As a teacher with a compromised immune system, type 1 diabetes, I strongly recommend the Hawaii DOE follow CDC guidelines for opening schools. Desks should be 6 ft. apart, not 3, students should wear masks, AND have their temperature checked on their way into school. Hospitals, airports, and other businesses are doing temperature checks, but we are supposed to "visually" estimate if a student has a temperature...this is not scientific and certainly not providing teachers with the best possible medical protection until there's a vaccine. Please consider CDC best practices when deciding this issue or many teachers may choose to not return to work due to the risk factors, leaving our students without expert teachers in their subject matter.
Mahalo, Dr. Stader

Get Outlook for iOS

Gmail

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

Testimony

Joleen Tun <joleentun@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

July 7, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Discussion item VI(A): presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Joleen Tun, I am a teacher at Keoneula Elementary school in the Campbell Kapolei district. As a teacher with a compromised health condition I feel that my health is at risk. Schools Are given the option to place students 3 ft apart when stores, gyms, business, restaurants are required to have 6ft distance between people. In the classroom teachers and students are not required to wear a mask unless students are around a big group of students, not in their classroom. We are not allowed to take temperature checks because "we are not medical professionals." We are also not allowed to place partitions between students and our air conditioning ventilation system are not a concern. Yet all previously mentioned are not the same requirements of other businesses. Businesses need 6ft distance between people, mask are required, partitions are placed between workers with high contact with others, temper checks are done with employees and guest at gyms, and air conditioning are checked for proper ventilation. These are measures that are required to keep people safe from the coronavirus. Why are schools different? We are like a place of business. We are around many people (adults and students) daily for 6-8 hrs a day. We have close contact with students (helping students with their classwork, hand over hand help with kindergarten students with writing, reading groups, tutoring groups, student individual testing: reading and Kindergarten assessments are done quarterly), which puts students and teachers at risk. If schools have modified guidelines of the above mentioned and don't follow the same CDC guidelines as other businesses, schools are likely at a high risk of having an outbreak. Please reconsider changing your school reopening plan for school year 2020-2021, to follow the same CDC guidelines as other businesses. It would make teachers, parents, and students feel safer, and highly likely prevent an outbreak of the virus in schools.

Thank you,

Joleen Tun (teacher)

Gmail

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

Mask rules and distancing

Rob Fujii <koich72@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:38 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am a 6th grade DOE teacher and I oppose the policy of allowing only 3ft distancing between students in the classroom and also the optional wearing of masks in class. In an enclosed space such as school classrooms, having only 3 feet distancing between students and allowing them the option of wearing a mask jeopardizes the safety of myself and my students. Please require 6 feet distancing and wearing of masks in school classrooms.

Mahalo,
R. Fujii

Gmail

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

3 feet to 6 feet

Beckey Wong <beckey.wong@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:39 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi BOE,

I wanted to ask you to please change the required social distancing distance from 3 feet to 6 feet between each student to ensure the proper safety conditions in the classroom for the students and us teachers. We all will be contained in a classroom for about 6 hours a day and it's important we keep the circulation of air in and around each other as free flowing as possible. To ask the students to always face forward is likely not going to happen as curiosity and human behavior usually has us facing the speaker. This concerns me not only as a teacher, but as a parent of a DOE student. Please consider the safety of all parties as we head back to school.

Thank you for your consideration,
Beckey Wong

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Testimony

gtfkaneohe@aol.com <gtfkaneohe@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:39 AM
Reply-To: gtfkaneohe@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Alison Fukuda and I am the art specialist at Ala Wai Elementary School. This testimony is in response to *Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening of schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year*. This item relates to the HIDOE's recent position that students' desks can be three feet apart as long as students are facing the same direction. I, for one, believe that this is extremely dangerous for students, teachers, and the community as a whole.

Just this morning as President Trump announced that schools will reopen in the fall, a medical expert clearly stated that schools need to create smaller classes with staggering groups in order to follow the CDC guideline of at least six feet of social distancing throughout this coronavirus crisis. In addition, the medical expert stated that everyone should wear a face covering or mask when in public, this includes the classroom.

Local officials stated that the idea of not needing to maintain six feet of personal space would only be feasible when interacting with members of your household like roommates and children. The effects of coronavirus have been undeniably horrific. And given evolving concerns surrounding aerosol transmission, maintaining more than six feet of distance and requiring students and teachers wear a face covering or mask whenever possible is the safest move. For the health and safety of my students, colleagues, and family, I ask that the HIDOE be firm in their guidance that all classrooms will practice physical distancing of six feet whenever possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Erin Allan <erinallan@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Board of Ed Members,

I am emailing you today to share my concerns on Discussion Item VI(A) Presentation on DOE's plan for reopening schools. I do not feel comfortable with students not wearing masks or social distancing space being reduced to 3 feet. I am very disappointed to hear that after the agreed upon memorandum such changes were made in social distancing space requirements. Please make the necessary changes and follow what was agreed upon in the memorandum.

Thank you
Erin Allan
Special Ed Teacher
Voyager Public Charter School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lacey Kane <laceykne@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:41 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom May It Concern,

The safety and well being of our students should always come first and foremost. If the public is required to be 6ft apart to maintain health and safety, that same level of standard should be applied to our students as well. Families shouldn't have to choose between their child's education and health.

I trust that DOE will make the right decision for our keiki!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Deborah Eveland <deboraheveland@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha 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. My name is Deborah Eveland and I teach 5th grade at Hoʻokele Elementary School in Kapolei.

I am deeply concerned about our state's plan for reopening schools. With Hawaii cases on the rise and evidence of community spread, I do not feel that the current guidelines are acceptable for the health of students, staff, and teachers. 6ft of distance is the CDC's recommendation. This recommendation is based on extensive research on the transmission of viruses. The proposed 3ft required distance is totally unacceptable and a violation of my rights. I am concerned about contracting and transmitting the virus to my elderly parents. I have remained vigilant throughout this pandemic, following all mandates and taking precautions. It has been difficult and I am incredibly uncomfortable with the current plan for returning to school.
Thank you for your consideration.
-Deborah Eveland

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

nicole amby <yellowgirl96792@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I do not believe 3 feet between student desks are safe! Please reconsider this so all students, parents as well as teachers and staff can be safe! I look forward to hearing a better plan.
Mahalo,
Nicole Amby-Ginoza
Waikele Elementary Teacher
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

piacampo78 <piacampo78@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:44 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I would like masks to be worn by students and shields for teacher without masks. I would also like social distancing to be 3 feet so that all students can fit in class room.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Maya Sullivan <mayamidori9@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Niu Valley Middle 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 between students is not sufficient. Students are not going to all sit facing forward for hour, much less a whole day, so even if their chairs are facing the same direction, the extra space (6ft) will account for any stretching, turning, or talking that students will do in the classroom. If we are going to go back to school, we need to take all the precautions we can, with social distanced spacing being the bare minimum.

Mahalo,

Maya Sullivan

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sandrella <sandrella77@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi, my name is Sandra Rivas, I teach at King Kamehameha III Elementary, I would like K-5, to go back to what school was before Covid -19. I fear that masks and social distancing is not healthy for children. Children are resilient and do not pose a threat as carriers like adults do. Mask and social distancing should be done among adults only. Kids need to socialize and the masks 😷 are going to become germ 🦠 factories for kids and others. Unless, DOE provides medical grade masks for everyone, everyday.

Thank you,
Sandra Rivas

https://www.wired.com/story/its-ridiculous-to-treat-schools-like-covid-hot-zones/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=wired&utm_social-type=earned

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Classroom distancing needs to be six feet as recommended by State of Hawaii and the CDC.

Norma Stibbard-Schoeppel <normabessie6@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

6' social distancing in school

Annie Queirolo <qrolos@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please support 6' social distancing in schools. I understand the importance of children being back in school full time. It is ludicrous to think that K - 2 students will actually sit facing forward in a classroom all day. It is just not possible for them. Mask should be required in classrooms too. Support lowering class size so we can have 6 foot distancing in the classroom.

Sincerely,
Annie Queirolo
First Grade Teacher

Gmail

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

Re 7/9 BOE meeting

Nanna Lindberg <nanna.lindberg82@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Justin Hughey <hughey2000@aol.com>

Aloha

My name is Nanna Lindberg and I am a science teacher at Maui High School. I live with constant anxiety and fear for the health and safety of my students, their families, myself and my husband and child. We have diligently been socially distancing and wearing face masks to help prevent spread of COVID-19. Despite the efforts of our community there is still spread within the community. For that reason, six feet distancing and face mask requirements are in effect.

Why is it that these rules apply to other workers like cashiers (who also have sneeze guards), store and restaurant workers, and anyone in public but NOT considered necessary for teachers and students? Teachers and students are normally gathered in groups for hours on end each day, which is not recommended at the moment by health officials and experts. And still NOT expected to follow these precautions. Why are the lives of teachers expendable? Would anyone expect cashiers to sit and face customers without a mask all day? Teachers are not only asked to return to work face to face, but also to do so unsafely and put their lives and those of their family at risk.

Under these circumstances, school will have to be virtual. Or teachers will quit, or worst case die. Those teachers will not return once the spread of COVID-19 is under control. We are a state that is extremely understaffed in schools and this will exacerbate that problem even further. Teachers already feel under appreciated and now we are being asked to be sacrificial lamb. If we get sick, there will be no substitute teachers to fill our place since many are retirees of high risk and will not be likely to want to work.

Education and schools are the foundation of a society and when the foundation crumbles so does society. When we look back on this, if only just one teacher dies, will we still be able to say that it was worth it? So that parents can go back to work, when they are actually unemployed due to no tourism. We are not glorified babysitters.
I urge you to uphold 6 ft social distancing in classrooms and use of face masks as agreed upon by the DOE and HSTA in the MOU!

With extreme concern,
Nanna Lindberg

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Al Perez <mralperez@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:49 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.

Please mandate 6ft distance apart for the safety of students, staff and community.

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.”



Alejandro Perez
Moanalua Middle School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jerome Crisostomo <romirome808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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

My name is Jerome Crisostomo and I am a first year Special Education Teacher at Farrington High School. I humbly ask the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. I am not confident in returning to my worksite endangering the safety of my students, staff and myself.

At home, I have a high risk grandparent staying with us for the time being until this virus is contained and controlled. I do not want to put her at risk as well.

Mahalo,
Jerome Crisostomo

Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony: 3 Feet Policy

joanna@hawaiiantel.net <joanna@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Ms. Payne, Mr. De Lima, Mr. Barcarse, Ms. Cox, Mr. Kawano, Ms. Namau'u, Mr. Takeno, Mr. Uemura, and Mr. Voss,

I am a middle school teacher on Hawai'i Island. Many of my class sizes for the 20-21 SY are at 30, and when considering the A/B schedule, 15. I am also the wife of a middle school teacher, and the mother of one middle school student and one elementary student. We will all be returning to school in a few weeks.

A few questions for you:

- Have you all returned to the BOE office yet to attend a meeting?
- Have you physically attended meetings in the BOE office or anywhere else on a daily basis where mask rules are not required/enforced?
- Have you physically attended meetings in the office or anywhere else on a daily basis with no less than 15 people in a room at a time?
- Have you physically attended multiple meetings in the office or anywhere else and come within three feet of nearly 100 other human beings every day, four to five days a week?

My guess is no, no, no, and no.

Last question: Would YOU feel safe attending a meeting with 15 masked and unmasked people alike sitting no more than three feet away from you?

If your answer to this last question is "No," you are a hypocrite and your three feet policy will no doubt come back to haunt you. If you have the audacity to say, "Yes," you are a liar and will have blood on your hands. Welcome to the land of lawsuits.

I just visited the State of Hawai'i Board of Education website and came across this quote: "**Due to COVID-19, the Board Office is currently unavailable via fax and postal mail until further notice. The Board Office remains available via phone and e-mail. Board Members continue to be available via e-mail as well."**

Please do not deliberately FORCE over 200,000 of your wards (adults, teens, children, and even toddlers who report to Hawai'i's public schools every day) into the inescapable and potentially virus-laden capsules otherwise known as three-feet-policy-classrooms. Hypocrisy is not a good look!

Joanna Silva

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Ihira <mihira20@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:51 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 Michelle Ihira and I am an educator at Pahoa Elementary and my children attend Waiakeawaena Elementary School and Waiakea Intermediate School. We also have a high-risk Kupuna in our household. I understand that we are required to return to the classroom, however, we need to do so with care and caution. The CDC has guidelines to protect us, so why would we go against what they say? We need to keep social distancing and facemasks at the recommended level. I do not want to be responsible for bringing home the virus and possibly killing my Kupuna. How could we live with that on our conscience? This is a difficult time, don't make it more difficult than it needs to be. The safety of the students, faculty, staff, and their families at home need to be the focus of re-opening. Don't go back on your word. 6ft and facemasks all the time. If it can't work, then we shouldn't go back until we find something that will.

Sincerely,

Michelle Ihira

Gmail

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

Testimony

Daria Joaquin <djoaquin@whshipman.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Daria Joaquin and I am a grandmother of 10 public education students who will be in grades ranging from K to 12 at four different schools on the Big Island. I am also a mother of a Big Island school teacher. 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.

Today I am writing to ask you to please ensure that schools maintain the recommended 6 feet of social distancing for students while they are on campus. This is the recommendation of the CDC as well as the social distancing requirement for all other groups/gatherings on our islands. I am disappointed to learn that the DOE is even considering not following medical guidelines and; thereby, placing the health of our children and school employees in jeopardy.

The CDC and State of Hawaii Department of Health guidelines are very clear and have been communicated to the public frequently.

CDC guidelines on how to practice social distancing state:

"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."

State of Hawaii Department of Health guidelines state:

"Maintain a distance of 6+ft, or two-arms' length, from others to prevent germs from spreading."

Thank you for your time and ensuring the safety of our keiki as well as our school's faculty and staff.

Mahalo,

Daria L Joaquin

164 Hoomalu St

Hilo, Hawaii 96720

808-443-7909

Gmail

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

Teachers Requesting Mandatory Mask

ingrid fregeau <freein68@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:52 AM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Since masks are mandatory to enter stores and public places, it should be mandatory for anyone in schools and classrooms to wear a mask before entering, since schools are public places and the mask was already scientifically proven to reducing significantly the risk of infection in a group. Kids, students and employees with fragile respiratory health conditions such as asthma should do distance learning or teleworking for their own safety and the safety of others. Additionally, if it takes 14 days to measure the Infection impact of reopening the state to flights coming from other pandemic areas with high rates of contamination, schools should reopen after we can observe if COVID-19 is spreading in our community because of tourism. Even a conservative state like Georgia has now announced that it requires its students to be wearing a mask. If safety comes first, the safe way to reopen a public school to face-to-face learning setting is to enforce the strict policy of wearing a mask. Teachers should not face a group of potentially contaminated infectious students who speak and therefore send droplets their way without mask barriers to protect everyone. Teachers being older , some with preconditions among faculty members, are at risk facing 15-20 speakers all day. Can Hawaii wi it current shortage afford to send any teachers to emergency rooms? Please, insure that wearing a mask is a mandatory requirement. Caring is protecting.

Aloha,
Your Public Servant,
Ingrid Frégeau

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Julia Yamashiro <julia.yamashiro@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:53 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.

Please mandate that the distance between student desks is 6 feet. I am a teacher and concerned for my health and safety. Students will already have restricted movement in the classroom. They will NOT face forward at their desks. To expect them to do this is unrealistic.

I know you care about our students and teachers. Please keep us all safe.

Thank you,
Julia Yamashiro

Gmail

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

Testimony

Leah Drury <druryleah@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I have been an educator for 14 years, and I'm also a single mom of a 12 year old and a 10 year old. I am testifying for my family and my students who I love. As our Hawaii Covid numbers rise why social distance for less than the recommended 6 feet? I want to go back to work but safety is a top priority. I was not a fan of virtual learning but I know I need to be flexible for the well-being of everyone I'm in contact with especially my family.

Mahalo,
Leah Drury

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

6 foot social distancing in classrooms

qrolo@juno.com <qrolo@juno.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:53 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please support 6' social distancing in schools. Why does everyone else have to have 6 feet and wear masks in public yet it's okay for our children to be 3 feet apart with no mask. I understand the importance of children being back in school full time. K - 2 students will not sit facing forward in a classroom all day. It is just not possible for them. Mask should be required in classrooms too. Support lowering class size so we can have 6 foot distancing in the classroom. If you think this is safe please join a class for a week.
Sincerely,
Dennis Queirolo
Parent and husband of a teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Clyde Shinsato <c_shinsato@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:55 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing to you as a teacher of first graders and as a teacher that falls into a high-risk category of nearing retirement age and as a caregiver to a 90-year-old mother. I am deeply concerned for the health and safety of all concerned as I teach in a population where there are many multigenerational families living and working together. With the current upswing in community spread, I along with my fellow colleagues, are extremely uneasy returning to the classrooms if the DOE doesn't mandate 6-foot distancing in our classrooms in accordance with CDC guidelines. For our littlest learners, we realize that face to face instruction is the best model to adapt, however, as aforementioned, the priority is the health and safety of our students, their families, as well as my own family, above all else. We are all at risk and do not want to have to quarantine and/or shut down classrooms or schools should we have an outbreak.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Shinsato
Kapalama Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

maribel gali <imanimele@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE,

Good morning. I am emailing 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 teacher at King Kaumuali'i Elementary school and my daughter attends Kapaa High School. As a person with a with an underlying medical condition, allowing only 3 ft of distance between students and myself will make me more susceptible to Covid-19 should any of my students be asymptomatic. Also, my mother is 75 years old and is also at high risk should my daughter or myself become infected with Covid-19 due to the proposed inadequate social distancing of 3ft in public school. I implore the Board of Education members to mandate that schools follow the CDC recommended guideline of maintaining 6ft of social distancing, as well as, the mandatory use of face masks or shields by all students and staff members in every DOE school. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Maribel Gali

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ricky <Rikson@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE,
I believe that social distancing that is less than 6 feet apart, is a health risk to our students and our teachers, please consider following the guidelines that are recommended by the CDC.
Thank you,

Ricky M.
Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony

JENNY Stevens <casey1118@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:57 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I'm writing in concern for the situation that we teachers are in at this time with the suggestions that 3feet distancing of students in class is enough. I strongly disagree, that suggestion puts us right back to a normal class setting and that makes no sense!
I ran a summer school program at my school for a month and we set up the classroom for 20 students w/ 6 feet distancing of desks. It was a tight fit for the students and did not leave teachers much safe room w/ the 6 feet distancing between desks for movement around the class. Along w/ all the DOE, BOE and CDC guidelines, it was VERY stressful to run a safe and compliant session but safety is primal!
We seem to be considering ALL possible situations for our students but the other concern I have is the concern of safety for teachers and EA's who have to be in classes all day every day with our students. Where is the concern for OUR SAFETY! 3 feet distancing is NOT ENOUGH!!!
Mahalo!

Jennifer De Silva Stevens

Kohala Middle School

Gmail

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

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

Lora Okamoto <lora808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Lora Okamoto and I am testifying as an educator and parent 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 third grade teacher at Solomon Elementary School. I love my students like my own children but they do socialize a lot which is natural for their age. Even if I place their desks 3 feet apart, they will certainly turn their heads to speak to one another and won't hesitate to share supplies or help. That is natural and can happen so fast that even if I were right beside them I'd be unable to stop them in time. With our hybrid learning model and threat of schools shutting down, iit is imperative that I use all the time I have with my students to make sure they learn, and not being on the constant lookout for students who aren't being safe. The 3 feet is not enough and adding on the relaxed mask recommendations places everyone at great risk.

My son will be a junior at Campbell High School. He enjoys attending school, does well, and has been a part of the NJROTC program since he was a freshman. He does have allergies and has had asthma since he was a toddler that has required several emergency room visits and hospitalization. 3 feet of distancing in the classroom is not enough. No matter how old they are, students like to socialize and will move in the classroom and in their seats. He is very reluctant to return to school knowing that his health may be compromised. Campbell is the largest high school in the state. How can they monitor and enforce the social distancing of 3 feet much less 6 feet in the common areas and areas outside of school that the students must pass through to enter and exit campus? While it is uncomfortable for him to wear a mask all day, I will ensure that he does but cannot promise him that others will abide by that rule.

Please reconsider your distancing and mask requirements for the safety of our children and teachers!

Mahalo,

Lora Okamoto

Gmail

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

Testimony

Carol Ford <csford68@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to testify on **Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening school for the 2020-2021 School Year.**

The idea that the Board would decide to place children **only** three feet apart in the classroom is incomprehensible. When going out in public, the CDC's own guidelines suggest that in **ALL** stores and other public places we remain **SIX** feet apart. The suggestion currently being discussed makes **no** sense. To expect our keiki to sit so closely together, and not turn around to talk to their neighbor or lean across the aisle and speak with their friend is unbelievable. You're talking about our keiki!

Yes, our keiki should return to school. But the current suggestion puts them, parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles and teachers **all** at risk.

And remember, our islands are currently only in the first phase of this global pandemic! What happens when the second phase hits?

Respectfully,

Carol Ford
Pōmaika'i Elementary School

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

MATTHEW MASUYAMA <matthewmasuyama@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a physical education teacher and I stand for the health, safety, and welfare of my students. I personally do not believe we should be opening schools up during this time. It would make sense to delay opening to a later time. Why are we not on the same timeline as the mainland anyway? Would make more sense to shift to when they are in school. Especially when our classrooms heat index is off the chart due to lack of air conditioning for every classroom in Hawaii!!! Push the start date to Sept and you will be able to have a cooler learning environment.

Why are we putting our keiki and our teachers at risk? Are we not supposed to be trying to "flatten the curve"? So we return to school, bring people together, not make masks mandatory, not enforce the 6 foot rule? ALL OF THIS IS CRAZY!!!!! I'd like to see the "politicians" do what we are being told to do!!! There is NO WAY they would show up!!!

PLEASE CONSIDER THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS!!!!

Testimony for 9 July 2020

Renee Dieperink <reneedieperink@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:58 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you to share my thoughts and findings regarding the reopening of schools in the Coronavirus era. I am a mother of two students who go to school in Hawaii, and also a teacher at a public elementary school.

My short version is that I wish we could go back to normal. No social distancing, no masks. I have my reasons for this, and can provide scientific studies but those don't seem to matter anymore. People don't seem to change their opinions when presented with FACTS. And because I know that what I would like is not going to happen I have this proposal:

ReOpening of Schools According to Three Models:
1. Back to NORMAL
   Some school buildings can have teachers and students who prefer to go back to the old normal.
2. The new ABnormal
   These school buildings can have teachers and students who observe social distancing and wear masks
3. Distance Learning
   Teachers who are not at all comfortable, or high risk, can teach distance learning, and parents who do not yet want to send their kids back to school can do online distance learning.

This way everyone is happy!

Besides this I have the following quotes and links for consideration regarding social distancing, masks, and asymptomatic carriers:

Here's what the American Academy of Pediatrics said in their recent guidance:
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/

"the AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school."

And they went on to say that:
"Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-feet spacing rule between students with the potential downside if remote learning is the only alternative."

And here's what they said about elementary schools in particular:

Elementary Schools

Higher-priority strategies:

- Children should wear face coverings when harms (eg, increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction).
- Desks should be placed 3 to 6 feet apart when feasible (if this reduces the amount of time children are present in school, harm may outweigh potential benefits).

- Cohort classes to minimize crossover among children and adults within the school.
- Utilize outdoor spaces when possible.

Lower-priority strategies:

- The risk reduction of reducing class sizes in elementary school-aged children may be outweighed by the challenge of doing so.
- Similarly, reducing classmate interactions/play in elementary school-aged children may not provide enough COVID-19 risk reduction to justify potential harms.

And check this paper with a statistical analysis of national coronavirus numbers, called:

Are Children Really Recovering 99.9584% of the Time From COVID-19?

https://childrenshealthdefense.org/news/are-children-really-recovering-99-9584-of-the-time-from-covid-19/

Age 0 to 19 Demographic

Total Fatalities – 55

Total Cases – 132,096

Probability of Fatality = 0.0416%

From this we can calculate the Probability of Recovery as 100% minus the Probability of Fatality.

Probability of Recovery = 99.9584%

And in their conclusion they stated:

"This data suggests that extreme measures for ensuring the safety of the Age 0 to 19 demographic may potentially do more harm than good. Policy decisions for governance and education should always be weighed against the very real possibility of severe emotional stress, psychological strain, and stunted social development, created by preventing young American citizens from attending school in person, or imposing severe protective measures to limit physical contact while in attendance in school."

But what about asymptomatic carriers?

Many teachers seem concerned about kids as asymptomatic carriers who could make teachers or their family members sick. Here is a video of WHO Dr. Van Kerkhove, who says that transmission from asymptomatic carriers is very rare. Of course the next day she retracted it and claimed people misinterpreted what she said. I took it like a child admitting she took a cookie from the jar, but then saying oh no no, I didn't say that!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQTBIbx1Xjs

She says it's very rare that asymptomatic carriers transmit onwards. However, pre-symptomatic carriers do, meaning the people who actually started having some symptoms.

And on the OSHA website it says this about masks:

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/covid-19-faq.html#cloth-face-coverings

Cloth face coverings:

- Will not protect the wearer against airborne transmissible infectious agents due to loose fit and lack of seal or inadequate filtration.

Surgical masks:

- Will not protect the wearer against airborne transmissible infectious agents due to loose fit and lack of seal or inadequate filtration.

When I point that out, the mask lovers will claim this bullet point, and that we wear it not for ourselves, but for others:

- Are worn in public over the nose and mouth to contain the wearer's potentially infectious respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks and to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), to others.

But...how exactly are others protected when they are still wearing a cloth face covering that still does not protect them from airborne transmissible infectious agents? No logic! Reminds me of the book 1984 where the government makes everyone believe that 2 + 2 = 5. I feel that if you want to wear a mask because you think it protects you, wear one!

Thank you for your consideration,

Renee Dieperink

Mother, and teacher at Enchanted Lake Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nicole Arakawa <nicole.arakawa@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a fourth grade elementary education teacher in Central Oahu, and I am writing this testimony in opposition of the 3-feet distancing between students. As a parent, I have done my part in keeping my family safe by remaining at home with my family, in quarantine, for the past several months. If we go out, it is for necessary reasons such as grocery shopping for doctor appointments. When out, we make sure we are wearing a mask (that I clean regularly), and we always make sure we keep our 6 feet distance from everyone else. I have medical issues as well, so I am doing everything that I can to keep myself healthy. So, my concern is this...if we are requiring this for everyone while out in public to keep everyone safe, why is it not required for our school classrooms? I can't fathom the thought of going back into the classroom and having a child who is asymptomatic, come to school and spread the virus to his/her peers, and to the teachers. Likewise, if a teacher who is asymptomatic comes to school and spreads the virus to others, including students, because we will all be within distance of spreading the germs. Remember that this virus is spread through the air via droplets and can remain in the air for a period of time before descending to the ground. A person can contract the virus very easily if we are to place students 3 feet apart. To add to this, DOH is requesting that students not wear a mask while in class? If this is true, how can this be a safe environment for students and teachers?????

We need to work together and create a plan that will provide the best scenario for our students and teachers to resume school in a safe environment, where there is minimal risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. As an educator, at this time of summer, 3 weeks prior to school, I am usually creating my custom curriculum, setting up my classroom, and preparing for my students; however, with the uncertainty and concerns of the current guidelines, these normal preparations have been put to the side....because, let's face it, if a person does not feel safe for him/herself, and for the safety of others, they cannot concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

Thank you for your consideration and taking the time out to hear my concerns. It is my hope that we will begin the year with a safer plan in place.

Sincerely,

Nicole Arakawa
Grade 4 Teacher
(12-year veteran teacher)
Mililani Waena 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

Cassandra Kahele <leilani_01@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:59 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing to let you know that I do NOT agree that our teachers and children should be only 3 feet apart. As a mother of 3 children all in school still and a DOE teacher, I think this is unfair. Why must I stand 6 ft apart everywhere else in our state, but our teachers and children are expected to be only 3 feet? And from my understanding it is only 3 feet apart left to right. Our principal is lining up desk less than 3 feet apart from front to back. This is ridiculous! My students sneeze all the time... you really think these germs will not travel less than 3 feet? I have family members who have compromised immunity and a grandmother in their 90's. But I cannot be near them if we go to this type of teaching environment! We also have NO AC in our classrooms. Which means I will have at least 20 children in a classroom, wearing face masks, in 90-degree weather?!?! We should have pushed school back to September to be able to really plan this out! I am saddened that our state continues to think so little of our children and Teachers. I work very hard! I work damn hard for my students! Distant and in class learning! It is not fair to say things like 20% pay cuts, Furloughs, and still expect them to work in these working conditions. Please Please! Think of our children and teachers! They too are important!

Mahalo nui loa!
Cassandra Kahele

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." — Albert Einstein

Gmail

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

6 feet distance

Kelcie Luke <kelcieama@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:00 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi!

I am emailing you regarding a big concern regarding social distancing. Dr. Kishimoto mentioned in her news conference that schools will only be required to keep a 3 feet distance between students. This is irresponsible and very unsafe! CDC recommendation is 6 feet distancing. If the State is also emphasizing 6 feet distancing, why is it okay for children in schools to only maintain 3 feet distance? If you have elementary students facing forward and only 3 feet apart, do you really think they won't turn around or to their side to talk to the student next to them? Teachers are already apprehensive about returning to the classroom; this adds an additional concern.

Please reconsider mandating a 6 foot distance between students and staff in schools.

Thank you!
Kelcie Luke
School Counselor

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

testimony against 3ft distancing for our kids seating in classrooms

Gkoshiro <gkoshiro@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a very concerned parent. I have two children who attends public school in the Pearl City area. It makes me very uncomfortable to hear that my children will be seating so close to each other during school time. Both of my children are very asthmatic n since practising social distancing from March until now they had no breathing problems n stopped their meds during this time. I am really afraid that seating so close together will make them vulnerable to get sick if other children are not practising social distancing at their home. That is so stressful at the thought my kids could bring home the virus to home. At home i have 4 other babies 4,3 ,2 & 7 month old. I myself have underlining health issues so we have been very distance since the beginning. To be honest im not sure if i would let my kids go to school until there are more safer ways to go to school n feel safe.

Nohea Oshiro

Honorable 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 Sandra Hashida, and I am speaking as a special education teacher and concerned community member. I teach at Kipapa Elementary School and live in the Mililani community.

I am concerned about the proposal for 3-foot distancing between students in the public schools. It could potentially put our students and teachers at risk of contracting the coronavirus which could lead to additional community spread. It does not conform to CDC and OSHA guidelines for prevention of transmission of COVID-19. Coronavirus cases are increasing around the United States including Hawaii. With the return of transpacific travel in August coinciding with the reopening of schools, further increases are likely.

CDC guidelines for the Coronavirus Disease specify the use of social/physical distancing of "at least 6 feet from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces." OSHA guidelines for employee safety specifies that "social distancing involves maintaining at least six feet of distance between people and is an effective way to help reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus." Why would we ignore these guidelines?

I have heard that the proposal is to enable more students to be in a classroom at a time. Why would we risk our children's health and the health of the community to fit more students in the classroom?

Some argue that students and teachers can wear cloth face masks and face shields throughout the day. CDC guidelines discuss the feasibility of using facemasks and face shields and admit that their use may not be possible for certain populations.

I participated in my school's summer program where we implemented social distancing of six feet between students. Desks were spaced six feet apart in the classroom, and students were expected to stay at least six feet apart when not at their desks. They naturally gravitated toward each other and needed frequent reminders to keep the six foot bubble around themselves. But the six foot distance enabled me to alert them when this happened and prevent close contact. A three-foot distance would not allow that alert time.

Our children and teachers are expected to spend up to six hours together every school day. We must stay in our classroom throughout the day including for lunch. Social distancing of six feet is expected in the grocery store, and most people spend less than an hour there. Would you feel comfortable staying in a classroom for up to six hours every day with only three feet of distance between you and others? Would you feel safe? If your answer is no, please vote to maintain six feet of distance in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Sandra Hashida

Testimony

Uakili'ohu Hawai'i <uakiliohu@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:00 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.

We are teachers, Jesse P Neumann (Ke Kula ʻo Nāwahīokalaniʻōpuʻu) & Tatum K Neumann (Keonepoko Elementary School). We also have 4 children who attend Ke Kula ʻo Nāwahīokalaniʻōpuʻu.

It is absolutely unacceptable to encourage a minimum of 3 feet of spacing between each student within the classroom, whether it be from back of head to back of head or not. For the sake of our keiki, We should keep to the CDC recommended guidelines of 6 feet minimum spacing. we all know too well that even 6 feet is pushing it, as students, especially the younger ones, will be touching each other and other adults in transition times. We need to consider taking extra precautions for their safety and the safety of their ʻohana they will go back to each day. Imagine, 600 students in a school will go home and be in contact with 1000+ people outside of school EACH DAY. Do we really want to take that risk? Do we really want to take that risk? many of our students live in multi generational households, included in that our our beloved kūpuna!!!

I, Tatum Neumann, as an educator in an elementary school setting, I get sick every August going back to school. It is hard to keep elementary school students from touching their face, sneezing/coughing into their hands without washing shortly after, all while wanting a hug or touching school property/class supplies/furniture.

We are begging you to reconsider the 3 foot minimum spacing requirement.

Na māua me ka mahalo,
Keʻala (Tatum) & Punahele (Jesse)
...and our ENTIRE ʻohana.

FOR THE SAKE OF OUR KEIKI, OUR KŪPUNA, OUR ʻOHANA, OUR HAWAIʻI...

Ola.

Gmail

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

3 feet social distancing is DANGEROUS

Ms. Kuroiwa <ckuroiwa@nimitzeagle.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am an elementary school teacher (K-2) in the State of Hawaii for the past 33 years. I am in the at risk age bracket along with 1/3 of the teaching force in Hawaii. To allow 3 feet social distancing with the number of cover-19 cases increasing in our state and nation wide is DANGEROUS to the health, safety and well being of all - students, teachers, families, everyone involved with education.

I am asking that we follow what Dr. Fauci & Dr. Bruce Anderson have said in recent days - 6 FEET social distancing and MASKS or FACE SHIELDS.

Working with lower elementary students I've had to deal with running noses, coughs and vomit. Many times the little ones don't cover their coughs and sneezes and I get sprayed when I'm working with them in small groups. I've had many students come running to me with hanabutta dangling down and their hands under it. This required my immediate assistance with kleenex to help them. Many students don't know how to blow their noses so, you have to teach them. When they feel sick with a sore stomach, I've taught my students to quickly grab a rubbish can then come to me so I can send them to health room. For those that don't make it in time, there's vomit everywhere - tables, desks, chairs, carpet, books, students clothing and my shoes. All of these occurrences are day-to-day in the elementary classroom - putting everyone at rise to exposure to droplets in the air that can spread covid-19. 6 feet distancing allows a safer learning environment. FACE shields for ALL students provides less risk for droplets to spread upon coughs and sneezes. We need to ensure a SAFE LEARNING environment for ALL. I'm begging you to please implement 6 feet social distancing in Hawaii's schools.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Mrs. Cheryl Kuroiwa
Teacher, Grade 1
33 years of service with the DOE
C.W. Nimitz Elem. School
520 Main St.
Honolulu, HI. 96818

Gmail

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

COVID and school

Pooie95 <pooie95@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:00 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We need to have 6 ft of distance at all times. Masks should be worn all the time. I have lupus and the guideline that are currently presented endanger me.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

RE: Testimony

joyce choy <sixlights@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:01 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am writing to you, because of the safety and well-being of everyone involved in operating within the school system.

We need to keep safe by following the safety guidelines. A six feet distance between people for the avoidance of getting Corona virus is most important.

I disagree with the three feet distance between students in the classroom.

We all need to continue to use the basic safety guidelines to keep all of us safe and healthy.

Please do not change the rules on us.

Mahalo,
Joyce Verduzco
Waipahu Intermediate School
Grade 7 Teacher
808-428-1664

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lori Lolotai <lori.lolotai@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I am a special education teacher and am OPPOSED to the three feet distance between students. Kids will talk, touch their neighbors, forget to cover their mouth and noses when they sneeze, while some of my students are unable to do it themselves. They're fluids go everywhere.

We have been hearing by experts that to prevent COVID from spreading, we need to wear our masks, practice social distancing of 6 ft OR MORE, not less, and do not gather with more than 10 people especially if from different households. Only Hawaii's Health Director is stating that for schools, 3 feet is appropriate as long as everyone is facing forward and all these kids are from different households. This is very contradictory to everything that we have been hearing over the last 7 months.

Please put our keiki and their families first and impose the 6 feet distance in and out of the classrooms and the wearing of masks to protect our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Lori Lolotai

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

Testimony

Kaala Fay Camara <kaalac@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:05 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 am an educator at Kualapuu School, Charter on Moloka'i and highly recommend that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks as advised by the CDC.

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 nui loa,

Ka'ala Fay Camara

PO Box 721

Kaunakakai, HI 96748

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sandra Ralat <sralatcruz@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:04 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.

Honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Sandra Ralat Cruz
Mililani High School

7-7-20

To Whom It May Concern-

We 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. We are writing as an educator and as parents.

As plans are being made for the opening of schools in Hawaii, I am asking that those in charge think carefully about our priorities. Is education a priority? Yes. Is getting students' parents back to work a priority? Yes. Is the health, safety, and LIVES of our students, families of students, teachers and staff, and the families of teachers and staff a priority? NO. That is clear with the new guidelines.

In what other place in our state right now are OVER 20 PEOPLE put into a small room together ALL DAY LONG sitting close to each other with the option of taking masks off sometimes? Nowhere.

Please imagine… At least 20 of these people (young children) will not have the bodily control to leave masks on all day OR keep their hands to themselves all day. They will possibly be in a room with windows that do not open for ventilation. They will be in a room where students are allowed to be 3 feet apart without masks, according to the DOE. If a teacher or staff member decides to take off his/her mask in the room so that students can hear more clearly or see a smile, they are putting their lives and the lives of everyone at risk. In this room, students will be restricted to a small box of space all day, unless the class moves outside in the 90 degree heat to conduct a lesson instead. Not only is this

scenario physically challenging and unsafe for all involved, it will be emotionally devastating to students as well.

Nothing has changed as far as treatments or vaccinations for COVID-19…yet suddenly it is OK to put over 20 people in a confined space all day when it comes to school. We have learned ways to stay safer that involve cleaning, DISTANCE and MASKS. Now, however, it seems that those in charge are deciding that distance and masks are not important after all. We KNOW that every teacher and staff and parent out there wants all students at school every day. Trust me… we ALL want that and wish it could happen soon. But what are we giving up to make that happen? How can school be more important than lives?

Please consider making social distancing in the classroom a priority as school resumes this fall. Please require masks to be worn all day in the classroom. Please require a smaller number of students in one classroom at a time.

Mahalo,

Christy Sakamoto
Keith Sakamoto
Wailuku, HI

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kris Morikawa <kris.mika.1521@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a 1st grade teacher at Solomon Elementary. I would like to comment on the reopening of schools. 3 feet distancing between students is not safe for students and teachers. It's near impossible to keep 6 year olds from facing each other to talk, enforcing them to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing, or having them keep them hands/fingers out of their mouths. A 6ft. distance would keep all students and teachers safer from spreading germs and COVID. Please think about the safety of students as well as teachers and their families.

Sincerely,
Kris Morikawa

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Sean Witwer <s_witwer@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

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.

My name is Sean Witwer. I am a Special Education teacher and have taught for over 20 years at Farrington High School.

I am testifying AGAINST the requirements of wearing a face mask for faculty members and students, as it presents an immediate danger to life and health, and the requirements of wearing a face mask should be removed from the DOE's reopening plan.

1. I am AGAINST the following requirements of the reopening plan:
    a. To the extent possible, all adults should cover their mouths and noses with a cloth face cover (mask) while at school. When within three feet of a student or other staff member, adults must wear a mask.
    b. Masks should be worn when keeping six feet apart is not possible, or when children face each other and interact in similar ways.
2. The mandated wearing of face masks forces me and my students to work in an oxygen deficient atmosphere, with an oxygen level below 19.5 percent, which is immediately dangerous to life or health.
    a. In an oxygen deficient atmosphere, tissues fail to obtain the oxygen necessary to function properly.
    b. Increased breathing rates, accelerated heartbeat, and impaired thinking or coordination occur more quickly in an oxygen-deficient environment.
    c. A lesser concentration of oxygen in employees' breathing air could endanger them physiologically and diminish their ability to cope with other hazards that may be present in the workplace.
    d. OSHA has created a Respiratory Protection Standard to protect workers from working in an oxygen deficient atmosphere based on the following reasoning:
        i. Human beings must breathe oxygen . . . to survive, and begin to suffer adverse health effects when the oxygen level of their breathing air drops below [19.5 percent oxygen]. Below 19.5 percent oxygen . . . , air is considered oxygen-deficient.
    v. Source: https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=25743&p_table=INTERPRETATIONS
3. Teacher's and students should be protected by OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard to protect workers from working in an oxygen deficient atmosphere.
    a. "Paragraph (d)(2)(iii) of the Respiratory Protection Standard considers any atmosphere with an oxygen level below 19.5 percent to be oxygen-deficient and immediately dangerous to life or health. To ensure that employees have a reliable source of air with an oxygen content of at least 19.5 percent, paragraphs (d)(2)(i)(A) and (d)(2)(i)(B) of the Respiratory Protection Standard require employers working under oxygen-deficient conditions to provide their

employees with a self-contained breathing apparatus or a combination full-facepiece pressure-demand supplied-air respirator with auxiliary self-contained air supply. In the preamble to the final Respiratory Protection Standard, OSHA discussed extensively its rationale for requiring that employees breathe air consisting of at least 19.5 percent oxygen. The following excerpt, taken from the preamble, explains the basis for this requirement:

b. Human beings must breathe oxygen . . . to survive, and begin to suffer adverse health effects when the oxygen level of their breathing air drops below [19.5 percent oxygen]. Below 19.5 percent oxygen . . . , air is considered oxygen-deficient. At concentrations of 16 to 19.5 percent, workers engaged in any form of exertion can rapidly become symptomatic as their tissues fail to obtain the oxygen necessary to function properly (Rom, W., Environmental and Occupational Medicine, 2nd ed.; Little, Brown; Boston, 1992). Increased breathing rates, accelerated heartbeat, and impaired thinking or coordination occur more quickly in an oxygen-deficient environment. Even a momentary loss of coordination may be devastating to a worker if it occurs while the worker is performing a potentially dangerous activity, such as climbing a ladder. Concentrations of 12 to 16 percent oxygen cause tachypnea (increased breathing rates), tachycardia (accelerated heartbeat), and impaired attention, thinking, and coordination (e.g., Ex. 25-4), even in people who are resting.

c. (Federal Register, Vol. 63, p. 1159.) The rulemaking record for the Respiratory Protection Standard clearly justifies adopting the requirement that air breathed by employees must have an oxygen content of at least 19.5 percent. A lesser concentration of oxygen in employees' breathing air could endanger them physiologically and diminish their ability to cope with other hazards that may be present in the workplace.

d. Source: https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=25743&p_table=INTERPRETATIONS

4. The wearing of face masks causes a person to breathe dangerous levels of carbon dioxide within one minute of wearing a face mask. Within one minute of wearing a face mask, the oxygen levels of the air falls below 19.5%.
    a. Oxygen-meter demonstration below.
    b. Source: https://banned.video/watch?id=5ef3eb10672706002f2db985
5. **Warning labels on standard face mask boxes admit that masks do not provide ANY protection against COVID-19 or other viruses.**
    a. “WARNING: This product is an ear loop mask. **This product is not a respirator and will not provide <u>any</u> protection against COVID-19 (Coronavirus) or other viruses or contaminants**.”
    b. “**Wearing an ear loop mask does not reduce the risk of contracting any disease or infection.**”
6. To adequately testify for the removal of face masks from the DOE’s reopening plan, I must address objections to my stance.
    a. The dangers posed by the Coronavirus and the numbers of people affected by the Coronavirus have been inflated, based on the following reasons:
        i. Feds classifying all coronavirus patient deaths as ‘COVID-19’ deaths, regardless of cause, which causes the numbers to be skewed upward. (Source: https://nypost.com/2020/04/07/feds-classify-all-coronavirus-patient-deaths-as-covid-19-deaths/)
        ii. The CDC is combining test results that diagnose current coronavirus infections with test results that measure whether someone has EVER had the virus. These numbers also include false-positive results. The numbers we see in the media cannot be trusted, as it is inaccurate and skews the numbers upward. (Source: https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/how-could-the-cdc-make-that-mistake/ar-BB14oz7H)

iii. Even the CDC itself explains on their website that the tests for coronavirus are inaccurate and can lead to false-positive results.
    1. The common cold can result in a false positive.
        a. “A positive test result shows you may have antibodies from an infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. However, there is a chance a positive result means that you have antibodies from an infection with a virus from the same family of viruses (called coronaviruses), such as the one that causes the common cold.” (Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html)
    2. “You may test positive for antibodies even if you have never had symptoms of COVID-19. This can happen if you had an infection without symptoms, which is called an asymptomatic infection.” (Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html)
iv. New COVID-19 definitions by states could raise case counts
    1. “Revised definitions for probable COVID-19 cases and related deaths by the Texas Department of State Health Services could result in a spike of reported cases of the virus.”
        a. “A positive PCR test result will no longer be required to determine a COVID-19-related death, Souri said.”
        b. “Clinical criteria needed to meet the definition of a probable COVID-19 includes:
            i. At least two of the following symptoms: fever that is measured or subjective, chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, or new smell and taste disorders;
            ii. At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; or
        c. Epidemiological links needed to meet the definition of a probable case includes:
            i. close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19;
            ii. Close contact, Souri said, is defined by being within 6 feet for at least a period of 10 minutes to 30 minutes or more depending on exposure.
        d. So, people can be counted as a coronavirus case if they have a fever and sore throat, or a cough, etc. Even if a person never has the coronavirus, they can be counted as a covid case.

7. Finally, I am against the wearing of face masks for my own concern about my health.
    a. After working for over 20 years for the DOE, I have had a number of co-workers and friends suffer death and major health illnesses while on the job.
        i. A coworker of mine in his 30’s, suffered and died from a brain aneurysm.
        ii. Another coworker of mine, after working over 30 years with the DOE, suffered a stroke the night after coming home from a stressful day of work. He tried to come to work the next Monday and was taken away by an ambulance, never to work another day at Farrington HS again in his life.
8. Conclusion
    a. I am against the mandated wearing of face masks and it should be removed from the DOE’s reopening plan.
    b. If I wear a face mask, can you guarantee that myself and my co-workers will not be in greater danger of suffering such things as brain aneurysm’s or strokes?
    c. If something happens to our health, will you compensate myself and co-workers for the loss of wages, loss of life, or medical bills your mandates cause from being forced to work in an

oxygen-deficient environment?

Sean Witwer
Teacher
Farrington High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mariana Solis <mariana.solis@campbell.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am already at a high risk of getting COVID-19. Thinking that students are allowed to sit closer AND without a mask, just sounds like a nightmare! I looked at my rosters, I already have more students than I've ever had in a class.

The whole situation is worrying me. I am not sure if going back to school is even possible.

-Concerned teacher.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Joelle Kramer <joellekp@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:06 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.” My name is Joelle Kramer and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Moanalua High School.

In July of 2019 I found out I was pregnant with my 2and child. You can imagine the joy my husband and I both felt as most parents would.

Fast forward to February 2020. I took a group of students to the Ala Moana Hotel and Hawaii Convention Center for the annual CTSO conference. I arrived early to the hotel to wipe down my room because COVID19 cases had been found here in Hawai'i and I didn't want to risk exposing myself as an expecting mother, my unborn child, my husband, and two year old daughter.

When the economy and schools shut down, I had only a month or so before my due date. I almost made the choice to birth my son without the support of my husband to reduce his risk and the risk to our daughter. Luckily, I had my husband with me and we stayed less than the usual 48 hours in the hospital to further reduce our risk.

We made the decision then, with our son's pediatrician, to keep our newborn son away from everyone for at least 8 weeks. No one besides my husband, daughter, myself, the nurse and pediatrician touched or saw my son for 8 weeks. This distancing was much greater than 6 feet, but it kept us relatively safe from exposure to the virus and kept us from potentially exposing anyone else to the virus.

As you can tell, our joy of expecting another child quickly turned in to fear and anxiety.

With the reduction in identified cases and physical distancing, that fear and anxiety was slowly easing.

Now, with the opening of the economy coupled with the rising number of COVID19 cases, we are faced with the task of opening schools. My daughter will start preschool in August. My son will only be 4 months old. My family's health and safety is top priority. By allowing only 3ft of space between students increases the risk of me contracting COVID19 and bringing it home to my family.

Then kicker? My husband is a teacher too. We will both be potentially exposed to hundreds of students every week.

I love teaching, but I value my family as well. Please make teachers and students a priority and do what is necessary to further reduce the risk of spreading COVID19 in our schools by honoring the 6ft distance.

Mahalo Piha,
Joelle

Gmail

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

Pandemic Response

Shawn Bus <dearshawn.bus@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom This Concerns:

Unless you goal is to encourage the early retirement of your veteran teachers due to the high risk of contracting Covid-19 from overcrowded classrooms, then you need to find a way to address the issue of social distancing in the classroom so that the recommendations of the CDC are implemented. It is time for drastic measures. Teachers want to teach, but should not be required to put themselves at risk of an already proven deadly infection when appropriately placed preventative measures could be put in place to significantly reduce that risk. Failure to do so not only shows a lack of respect and appreciation for teachers and other school workers, but will enfeeble teachers, and will effectively promote the attrition of qualified teachers at best, and their demise at worse. We need you to do the right thing, and require the implementation of CDC recommended measures BEFORE placing your school ohana at risk.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing risk to me, and my families personal safety, was a decisive factor in my retirement, effective June 1, 2020.

Sincerely,

Shawn M. Bus
Grade Three Honors Teacher, Retired
Waiakeawaena Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Dayna Santiago <dsantiago78@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Dayna Santiago. I work at Na'alehu Elementary School. I am writing as a Teacher caring for high-risk kupuna. I am a caregiver for my parents. My Father is 73 and my Mother will be 80 on July 25, 2020.

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehend plan for reopenimg schools plan for the 2020-3021 School Year.

Social Distancing three feet apart when possible is unfair and dangerous. The CDC recommended 6 feet. In addition, I feel that everyone should be required to wear a mask. Not just adults. Which is abother CDC requirement. Otherwise you are forcing us to put our lives at risk.

Please take this into consideration.

Mahalo,
Dayna Santiago

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

Mask Rules and Social Distancing

Nicholas Allen <nicholas.allen@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm a middle school FSC special education teacher at Mililani Middle School. My population has many disabilities that make them at higher risk for COVID19. This in turn puts all of the teachers, assistants, and service providers at risk as well. We are already exposed to bodily fluids such as blood, saliva, urin, and vomit, so we need that 6 foot barrier as an extra precaution, along with time to properly sanitize the area. Please reconsider changing social distancing requirements from 6 feet to 3 feet. This is incredibly irresponsible considering CDC guidelines clearly recommend a 6 foot distance. If we ignore these recommendations, we will likely have a rise in COVID cases which will just result in another closure.

I understand that we need to get schools open again so that parents can return to work. But let's not lose sight of the bigger picture. Another school closure only further harms us and our students.

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

Rules

Lucas Horton <hortonlucas740@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:09 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mask and 3-6 feet apart

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

3ft distance in classrooms is against the CDC guidelines

Martinez, Arnold <arnold.martinez@kalakauamiddle.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:07 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to provide testimony regarding the "3ft distance" recommendation from the DOE regarding safety precautions for return to school protocols during this current pandemic.

I am Arnold Martinez, I teach at Kalakaua Middle School. My wife and I are caregivers to two elderly parents. We live with our parents who are 85 and 83, who have current health conditions. I cannot afford one slip up during this pandemic, I cannot expose them when I come home from work, it may kill them.

For the DOE to go against the CDC guidelines of 6ft distance and state that 3 ft is enough for students in classrooms is ludicrous.

Please reconsider and do what is right.

Mahalo!

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Gmail

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

Testimony Boe July 9th 1:30pm

Justin <hughey2000@aol.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:09 AM

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Thursday, July 9, 2020 1:30p.m.

Testimony on agenda item VI. A

I am a teacher at King Kamehameha III Elementary school in Lahaina.

Questions:
Why is there a mandatory mask requirement on oahu but wearing a mask in our over crowded schools is optional? Any flu or virus spreads like a brush fire within our school every year. I have always felt like the state never has valued public education and now the poor kids and teachers are expendable?

Why isn't there a policy on shutting a school down when a certain percentage of the school has contracted covid? Yes children are less likely to contract the virus but those that do get it have experienced; organ failure, permanent neurological disorders, and other permanent health conditions. Schools should close if X amount of students have contracted the virus.

What are teachers going to do if there isn't a job for them because A large amount of students have moved away or their parents are afraid of sending their kids to school?Teachers shouldn't lose their job due to a lack of weighted student formula funding due to the pandemic.

Why aren't we mandating 6 feet distancing? The legislature has failed to provide proper funding for our schools and now our keiki will suffer greatly because we have overcrowded schools. Any teacher who feels their life is in danger showing up to work should be able to teach virtually.

Lack of proper resources
Schools and teachers are not given proper resources to reopen. Since the legislature has not given school adequate funding, parents come to school with bags of supplies for the school year. With so many unemployed parents I don't expect them to have the money to do this. That means more out of pocket money is a burden on teachers who Ige keeps saying will be furloughed. We should also should have thermometers and plexi glass to make sneeze guards around the individual desk and teacher desks just like any cashier at a business. They have done this in Japan schools.

The reality here is a lot of our keiki and teachers are going to die and/or have life long health problems from going to Our underfunded overcrowded schools. I don't feel safe going back to school and feel we have a lack of real leadership in this state that values our keiki and public education. We really need you to make smart decisions now more than ever.

Good luck and stay safe!
Justin Hughey
Third grade Special Education teacher
37 Poniu Circle
Wailuku Hi 96793

Gmail

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

Please please please!

Susan Baughn <sbaughn@kamaile.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:09 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Please mandate masks and social distancing in our schools. We have teachers that want and need their jobs. Teachers who have their own medical concerns or have loved ones at home that are at-risk. Please don't endanger our teachers and staff . Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo.
Susan Baughn

Gmail

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

Desks must be 6 feet apart.

tammy holt <tammy8707@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this testimony in favor of placing student desks at least six ft. apart.

In recent news COVID -19 has spread through summer camps in Georgia like wildfire. All it took was one infected counselor. He was asymptomatic and passed all entry precautions prior to starting his day at work. In turn, every child and adult who became infected immediately brought COVID-19 back to their homes. Where family members were exposed to COVID-19 without even knowing it.

This was a camp. While camp is choice, we must see how this deadly infection can be spread. To be honest, I am appalled that the BOE and the DOE is not doing more to minimize the risk of mass exposure. Rather, you are creating your own rules that completely contradict the recommended guidelines.

I am writing to implore that you take the health and safety of our children, their families, our faculty, staff vamd their families very, very seriously. You should be looking at ways to minimize all parties exposure in a realistic manner. At this moment, that is the job that you have been entrusted with. Make sure you do it well. Be the leaders that you sought out to be.

You should be appropriating funds that provide school's the money to purchase a device for every student. You must understand that we should not be exposed or subject to a flu that can kill us or the vulnerable household members that we live with.

You need to do better and it starts by taking the recommended guidelines seriously.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Tammy

Testimony

Nicole Arakawa <nicole.arakawa@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a fourth-grade elementary education teacher in Central Oahu, and I am writing this testimony in opposition of the 3-feet distancing between students. As a parent, I have done my part in keeping my family safe by remaining at home with my family, in quarantine, for the past several months. If we go out, it is for necessary reasons such as grocery shopping or for doctor appointments. While out, we make sure we are wearing a mask (that I clean regularly), and we always make sure we keep our 6 feet distance from everyone else. I have medical issues as well, so I am doing everything that I can to keep myself healthy. So, my concern is this...if we are requiring this for everyone while out in public to keep everyone safe, why is it not required for our school classrooms? I can't fathom the thought of going back into the classroom and having a child who is asymptomatic, come to school and spread the virus to his/her peers, and to the teachers. Likewise, if a teacher who is asymptomatic comes to school and spreads the virus to others, including students, because we will all be within distance of spreading the germs. Remember that this virus is spread through the air via droplets and can remain in the air for a period of time before descending to the ground. A person can contract the virus very easily if we are to place students 3 feet apart. To add to this, DOH is requesting that students not wear a mask while in class? If this is true, how can this be a safe environment for students and teachers?????

We need to work together and create a plan that will provide the best scenario for our students and teachers to resume school in a safe environment, where there is minimal risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. As an educator, at this time of summer, 3 weeks prior to school, I am usually creating my differentiated lessons/curriculum, setting up my classroom, and preparing for my students; however, with the uncertainty and concerns of the current guidelines, these normal preparations have been put to the side....because, let's face it, if a person does not feel safe for him/herself, and for the safety of others, they cannot concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

Thank you for your consideration and taking the time out to hear my concerns. It is my hope that we will begin the year with a safer plan in place.

Sincerely,

Nicole Arakawa
Grade 4 Teacher
Mililani Waena Elementary School

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

Testimony

hawaii charter <hawaiicharter@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:11 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education Members,
Please ensure the safety of our children by accepting no less than the CDC‘s recommndation of 6 foot spacing between children in classrooms. Any less than this will lead to the increased spread of COVID-19. Children who get this from school will likely spread it to their families, resulting in increased deaths of family members, especially grandparents. The trauma of losing their family members will negatively impact their learing. This is absolutely contrary to the DOE‘s current emphasis on social-emotional-learning, that is, when students have to experience trauma that could have been prevented by following CDC guidlines.

Sincerely,
Alexander Cyran
PO Box 117
Volcano, Hawai‘i 96785

Gmail

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

Testimony

Brent Watanabe <brent.watanabe@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year." My name is Brent Watanabe and I teach English Language Arts at Waipahu Intermediate School. As a teacher, I am struggling with the discussions for school reopening this year. I am not comfortable that the 3 feet distancing is enough space to keep a safe distance from each other. I have seen numbers spike with the reopening of professional sports leagues (currently MLB) and worry about the protective measures taking place for people's health. Seeing healthy athletes get Covid proves how real and easily it can transfer from person to person. I do not believe that putting teachers at risk this school year makes sense, especially without a vaccine in place. I am also wary of how effective face masks will be in the classroom and how it will negatively affect student engagement and participation.

I understand that getting education back and running is important, but there needs to be thorough discussions and measures put into place. I think hypothetically, if one student gets Covid, then the fallout will be time-consuming and deplete resources. I believe that online teaching is the best option right now.

Thank you, Brent Watanabe

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Gmail

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

3ft is unacceptable

James Smith <james.smith@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Department of Education,

My name is James Smith, I am a CTE teacher from Mililani high school that is 100 percent hands on classroom. At this point in time. Students in our classrooms will not have enough room to work on projects in our facilities at 3ft or 6ft distance. Please consider 100 online learning for now. Consider talking with governor Ige about the potential savings in money for the schools not running at the schools. That could help out our whole economy here in Hawai'i. Teachers should not have to go into the campus to work. They can work via from home which has been successful this past spring. The more movement from society, the more chances of contraction of the virus. Let's minimize our movement for now. Reevaluate at the New Years time and see where we stand. As of today we have seen a spike of 41 new cases and growing for new cases. The 3 ft rule will not stand for our students, families, teachers and other staff on campuses. Let's be safe in our safety standards and be a leader in how we can change how we run our education systems and state altogether. Let's work together not against our selves.

Aloha,
James Smith

Sent from my iPhone

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Testimony - BOE Pandemic Response

Shawn Bus <dearshawn.bus@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:12 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.

To Whom This Concerns:

Unless you goal is to encourage the early retirement of your veteran teachers due to the high risk of contracting Covid-19 from overcrowded classrooms, then you need to find a way to address the issue of social distancing in the classroom so that the recommendations of the CDC are implemented. It is time for drastic measures. Teachers want to teach, but should not be required to put themselves at risk of an already proven deadly infection when appropriately placed preventative measures could be put in place to significantly reduce that risk. Failure to do so not only shows a lack of respect and appreciation for teachers and other school workers, but will enfeeble teachers, and will effectively promote the attrition of qualified teachers at best, and their demise at worse. We need you to do the right thing, and require the implementation of CDC recommended measures BEFORE placing your school ohana at risk.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing risk to me, and my families personal safety, was a decisive factor in my retirement, effective June 1, 2020.

Sincerely,

Shawn M. Bus
Grade Three Honors Teacher, Retired
Waiakeawaena Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Robi <robi.nitake@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

The reopening of schools has suggested only a three foot distance between students, while such places as the grocery store have a six foot distance. Why is this? Is it because we hold student and teacher lives under that of the general public? If you are not a current teacher, then you have no idea how hard it will be to keep this distance between students. It is not safe for anyone involved in the learning process. Imagine coming into my classroom and trying to teach 9th graders with a mask, face shield and it being 95 degrees outside with no air conditioning. I can almost bet that someone is bound to pass out. I can barely survive the start of the school year without wearing a mask to teach. Please reconsider the three foot distance between students as the very minimum to protect out teachers as well as students.

Robi Nitake (teacher)

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Reilly Fukuoka <reillyfukuoka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:14 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 concerned with the recent decision to allow only 3 feet of spacing between students in the classroom. I prefer that there be at least 6 feet of separation between students and that everyone (teachers, students and staff) wear a mask when indoors whenever possible.

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 the risk for us.

Mahalo,
Reilly Fukuoka
Student that attends Molokai Middle School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Paige Fukuoka <paigefukuoka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:14 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 concerned with the recent decision to allow only 3 feet of spacing between students in the classroom. I prefer that there be at least 6 feet of separation between students and that everyone (teachers, students and staff) wear a mask when indoors whenever possible.

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 the risk for us.

Mahalo,
Paige Fukuoka
Student that attends Molokai High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lily Gong <lilycggong@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 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 Fern Elementary. And my own kids go to Koko Head Elementary. I am concerned when I read the guidance saying that spacing student seats three feet apart without masks was acceptable.

The coronavirus can stay aloft for hours in tiny droplets in stagnant air and infect people as they inhale. The risk is highest in crowded indoor spaces. While CDC states "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk by maintaining six feet or two arms' length of separation between and among students and staff members", why our guideline does not follow CDC recommendation? I feel unsafe to send my kids to school if the risk is so high. They might easily get the virus but without showing the symptoms. They might bring the virus to their elderly grandparents which will be life-threatening. I might also get the virus from my kids and pass on to my fellow teachers and students. Vice versa, my students spread the virus to me and I pass them to my parents, my kids, and their peers and teachers. We all know the virus spread quickly without practicing social distancing and wearing PPE. As an educator and a parent, I urge BOE to change the guideline to make sure each school provides a safer environment for staff and our Keiki.

Thank you

Lily Gong

Gmail

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

Testimony

Marylee Fredericksen <velzy_love@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am in support of no masks and 3 feet distancing in the classroom! I am assured with keeping a clean classroom and being diligent in maintaining 3 feet of distance between students we will be fine and learning will occur with little stress. Please don't mandate 6 feet and masks!!! It will cause stress and impact education negatively!
Mahalo,
Marylee Fredericksen

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Masks and 6ft Distancing Please

Skylar Decker <packman96793@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Skylar Decker and I'm a third grade teacher at Kahului Elementary School. I support the safety practice of wearing of masks and 6 ft social distancing in the public school setting. As an elementary school teacher of almost 20 years I routinely get coughed and sneezed on by my students daily. Having them and myself wear masks during this pandemic would be very beneficial to all of our safety in the school. Spacing of students' desks 6 ft apart would also help this issue. Wearing masks and being six feet apart are routinely recommended and mandated by the government and top health officials when out in public. Why would this be any different in the school setting? Am I or my students second-class citizens or expendable? Quite frankly I'm offended that you would even consider not having these safety practices in place during a pandemic that is growing worse everyday. Put yourself in my place or imagine you are a parent with a child in a public school. Wouldn't you want every precaution taken to keep your loved ones safe? Think about it and please do what is right. I can't imagine these safety precautions we'll be around forever and hopefully we'll get a vaccine soon where we can do away with these things. Thank you for your time.

Skylar Decker
Kahului School
Grade 3 Teacher

Gmail

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

Presentation of DOE’s Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools

Inez Takushi <itaku808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Inez Takushi, Linda Castelo, Dean Munsayac, Office Asst. III, Radford Complex

Agenda item: VI. Discussion Items, A. Presentation of DOE’s Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools

Position:
1. What happens if the health aide is absent and a student is sick and sent to the office? Where do we put the student? Who is going to handle the student? Students cannot sit in the front where people enter and exit.
2. Is anyone going to check the temperatures of each student in the classroom?
3. I heard that masks are not going to be required in the classroom. My suggestion is to have face shields provided for each desk in the classroom. Each student will wipe the shield prior to wearing and after wearing and leave it in the classroom on the desk. Or, all students wear a mask in class and a large picture of the student should be worn in class or placed on each student's desk, so the teacher can identify who is behind the mask.
4. How bad does the Covid-19 have to be before the school is shut down?
5. Will the office staff have to all be in at the same time or will they be able to come in on certain days to minimize exposure?
6. If an employee is sick and may have Covid-19, do they have to take personal sick leave or can they take administrative leave for the duration of time they have to quarantine?

Testimony

Linda Chingon <lindachingon@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 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 Linda Chingon and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Mokulele Elementary School.

I am a 62 year old teacher and I have been teaching at Mokulele Elementary School since October 1, 1989. For 30 years of teaching I have always felt safe at Mokulele Elementary School but not since March 2020. I don't feel safe and so I have not been to my school campus since March. I miss being at my school but I don't feel it is safe anywhere. I stay safe at home, only leaving when I need to get food or to visit my 82 year old mother and disabled father once a week.

Although I don't feel it is safe, I felt that with all the precautions of 6 feet apart, everyone wearing masks, constant cleaning, etc, it was tolerable safety for me to go back to school. I felt that the agreements through the MOU made it okay for me to go back to school, but now the DOE has reneged on their agreements and are saying 3 feet apart is okay and masks are optional. Students and teachers do not need to wear masks if you are in your cohort group.

Have you ever tried to keep young children apart? If you have children or have ever been with children, then you know how difficult it is to keep children apart or to have children keep their hands to themselves or to not touch things. But this is exactly what you are expecting children to do. You are asking them to not be children. It is ludicrous to expect children to act like robots and stay in one place, not touch each other and not share things. It is not in their nature to sit in one spot with their friends so close by, who they haven't seen for so long and expect them to stay apart especially when they can just reach out and touch each other.

Mokulele Elementary services mostly military students, it is after-all located on a military base. Many of our parents work demands they travel a lot. This opens up our students and then to us to a lot of germs. With testing not being done, temperatures not taken, masks not being worn, only being 3 feet apart this makes schools not a very safe place to be.

If we believe safety first, as we are always saying, then we need to walk the talk. Safety should be number one. I am just asking you to please make our schools a safe place to be for everyone. Safety First Please.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Wendy Sako <wendy.sako@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:16 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Wendy Sako and I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kea'au 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 strongly believe that it is putting teachers, students and their family members at serious 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.

Please help us to mitigate the spread of COVID-19--and help us to keep our schools safe for everyone.

Thank you for your time and strong consideration of the health and well-being of our students, teachers, staff, family members, and community.

Wendy Sako
Kea'au Elementary School
16-680 Kea'au-Pahoa Road
Kea'au, HI 96749
(808) 313-4667

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

Testimony

Se Hee Cho <seheechos2@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:16 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello,

My name is Sehee Moon, a member of HSTA since 20I am writing this email to testify why three feet should not apply in classrooms.

Although young children are less likely to be affected by COVID-19, they are still vulnerable than young adults. While young adults, college students, are keeping six feet distance among them, it does not make sense that young children will be only distanced three feet. It is not what we agreed upon.

Number of cases are in 40s today. Please reconsider.

‘Teachers are not sacrificial lambs’

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,” Rosenlee said. “The same rules that apply to the public should be followed in our schools.”

New York City schools have already seen 74 staff die because of COVID-19.

“The teachers of HSTA fully understand the benefit of schooling. That is why we became teachers,” Rosenlee said. However, he added, “teachers are not sacrificial lambs in the desire to open our schools.”

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.

“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 taken to ensure the health and safety of our keiki and our teachers,” Rosenlee said.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Annie Schultz <acm_schultz@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:17 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education Members,

Per the CDC guidelines, please establish protocols to mitigate the risk of coronavirus transmission in closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded settings, and close contact with others, including:
- REQUIRE EVERYONE TO WEAR MASKS
- REQUIRE EVERYONE TO MAINTAIN 6-FOOT DISTANCING
- ENSURE PROPER VENTILATION IN ALL CLASSROOMS
- REQUIRE DILIGENT CLEANING AND AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLIES

Thank you,
Ann Schultz, Teacher
Lokelani Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sheri Preston <sheprestonii@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:17 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 Sheri Preston. I am an educator at Kohala Middle School and have a son attending Kohala High. It is not okay for the Hawaii DOE to go back on the Memorandum of Understanding that was carefully devised and compromised as agreeable to both the HSTA and State. Putting school faculty and staff, keiki, and ultimately all family and communities in harm's way because it is most convenient for the immediate future is not acceptable. New York City schools have already seen 74 staff die because of COVID-19. 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.

We have to look to the foreseeable future. Changing the allowable "safe-distancing" in the classroom from 6 feet to 3 feet is not a smart alternative. This change will jeopardize the success of our Hawaii school's reopening plan. We need to stand firm and follow the CDC's recommendations to keep ourselves, keiki, families, and community safe. Do not allow this change to the MOU.

Sincerely,
Sheri Preston
Kohala Middle School Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jennifer Jo <jennifermelindajo@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Morning,

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 Jennifer Jo, and I am a Special Education teacher at Chiefess Kapiolani Elementary School in Hilo. I am concerned about the recent announcement that our classrooms can have a 3-foot distance between students if they are facing forward. I understand the need to get as many students back to school, however, the CDC has recommended at least 6 feet of distance for not only schools, but everywhere in public. I am not a high risk category teacher, but I have colleagues that are and I am scared for their health and well-being.

Also, as an Elementary School teacher, I teach students that love to be close to each other and hug each other and high five each other regularly. Having 3 feet of distance between them will make it that much easier for them to have physical contact with each other even if they are facing forward. Elementary school children will not face forward an entire block and we should not expect this of them.

I also wanted to express my concern about not allowing the children of teachers to be at school when their parent is a teacher. I live in an area with higher crime because of the affordability of housing in Hawaii, and I have to leave my 2 young girls home alone because I have no childcare options for them. I need to work so I can provide for them, and I know many teachers are facing this same concern. I really hope that you can reconsider allowing children of teachers to be at school when their parent is a teacher because there will inevitably be a higher rate of crimes against children if they are left at home unsupervised.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Jennifer Jo

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kim Nakamura <b1b2boys@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a concerned teacher, I am adamant about enforcing the 6 foot separation among students and teachers. I teach at Kipapa Elementary School and believe we should adhere to the recommendations set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We are putting ourselves and our families at greater risk for the spread of Covid-19. My sons are both asthmatic and I care for my parents who are in their 70's. I am only looking out for the safety of my students, their families, and my own.

Thank you,
Kimberly Nakamura

Gmail

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

Spread of infection

Audra Zook <20235177@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:18 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I know everyone is working very hard for the best possible environment for out Keiki and staff for this coming school year. So first I would like to thank everyone for the extra hours, meetings and time spent having discussions with the communities.

I wanted to explain a concern of mine for the 2020/2021 school year. I am a 5th grade teacher in Nā'ālehu, in the Ka'ū district on the Big Island. My classroom is over 90 years old and very small. Each day my students and I chart the temperatures in our room as a part of our Earth Science unit. From roughly 10:00 am - 2:06 when the bell rings the class is anywhere from 87 to 92 degrees. I teach with the lights off most days have several fans in each corner of the classroom that help cool us down. I have read many studies that says coughs and sneeze droplets remain airborne for 2-8 hours.

-If our fans our running and the children do not wear masks, everyone will be at the risk of infection.
-If our fans are turned off and we are wearing masks, we will unbearably hot for the majority of the day.
- If students are three feet apart, surely anyone who may become infected will infect the whole class.

I don't know what to tell parents, because I am uncomfortable myself in this situation. We have older family members, and I have an at risk child of my own to be mindful about. I

Hawai'i has been a leader in our country in preventing infection. However the mainland's numbers (and attitudes about prevention) are frightening to say the least. So what happens when tourists are allowed back? It's obvious to me that the single best thing we can do to protect our students we need to ask the government to delay allowing visitors until the mainland is stable and healthy. No matter what regulations we have in place in schools, students ARE going to to spread what ever sickness they have and take it back home to their families. To protect our families and students we need to plead with the governor to delay visitors.

Respectfully,

Audra ZOOK

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Nate Hix <nate.hix@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

6 feet minimum distance please

Nate

Gmail

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

(no subject)

Jan <808geminiz@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

"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."

Support and protect teachers and students! Follow CDC guidelines. Please don't sacrifice our lives and the lives of our students!

Jan Inn
Grade 4 teacher

Gmail

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

HDOE testimony re: CV-19 safe distancing in schools

Lisa Simmerman <lisa.simmerman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The legislature is going to need to have to accept the fact that CV-19 is not a simple fix. It's going to take money to hire additional teachers, EA's PTT, etc, get creative with utilizing buildings in order to ensure safe spacing between students. Additional money will be needed for washing stations, masks for children who do not have them, hiring additional custodians, nurses, and so forth.As a result, additional money will need to be projected for schools. I find it irresponsible that the state provided themselves a raise before understanding the extent of what CV-19 and what would be needed money wise. 3-6 feet is unacceptable- feet is minimum. In addition, there's going to need to be a lot of discussion about how to teach children where traditional methods are no longer able to be utilized- Especially in phoneme, phonics, etc. instruction where traditionally teachers need to be close to students to make sure that they are enunciating or utilizing various sound combinations and blends, etc.- particularly with PK-3 / lower elementary students as appropriate. This also includes SLP professionals, as well as at- risk personnel (age, auto immune issues, etc), as well as students w/ special needs. This is going to take a lot of sit down, time- consuming decision- making that will need to be flexible for changes. Children are children, they are not adults, they are going to need to be closely monitored for adherence to CDC standards and this will take time to train them up.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

testimony

Milton Tanji <miltontanji@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Milton Tanji and a teacher at Kahaluu Elementary School. I am testifying on behalf of Discussion item VI (A). I strongly believe that schools should keep insync with the CDC guidelines and maintain a 6 feet distance at ALL TIMES between faculty, students, parents and staff members. I understand that student to student transmission of COVID-19 may be rare, however as educators we are still susceptible to getting ill from our students. This can put ourselves and family members in jeopardy which I cannot do! Especially my kids and aging parents. Please be mindful of this when making this decision that will affect NOT YOU, but my students, their family, myself and my family.

Testimony

Emi Yamada <emi.yamada@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:20 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Emi Yamada and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Pohakea Elementary School. I am testifying 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, for our DOE staff, our families, keiki, and their families' sake to *please* enforce that ALL students and faculty wear a mask during the school day, with the exception of those with medical conditions for whom it will be dangerous to wear a mask, and also to have the students' desks be 6 feet apart. It has been recommended by the CDC and WHO numerous times that wearing face masks when in close proximity to each other helps prevent the spread of COVID-19. Also, if a student is not wearing a face mask, you can not expect a child to simply face forward for 3-6 hours without turning their head. If they cough or sneeze and they are not wearing a mask and their desks are only 3 feet apart, how can you ensure that their germs will not spread? In addition, the CDC states that even wearing a cloth face mask does NOT 100% guarantee that your germs will not be spread, but it is better than nothing. Just this morning, Hawaii News Now reported that over 230 scientists found evidence that COVID-19 particles can remain in a room even after the infected individual has left because it is airborne. Lastly, Governor David Ige has extended the face mask mandate stating that everyone needs to wear a face mask just about everywhere we go, especially in essential businesses. Both the Governor and Mayor Kirk Caldwell deemed schools essential months ago when the lockdown first started. Schools will always be essential. We need to ensure that everyone is safe by practicing the necessary procedures. Please reconsider changing the plans. We do not want hundreds of infected clusters in our schools just like we have seen everywhere around the islands due to people not wearing face masks and following proper social distancing protocols. HELP SAVE LIVES!

P.S. - I just finished teaching summer school. All my students wore face masks, I wore a face shield, and their desks were 6 feet apart. It is completely doable!

Mahalo,

Emi Yamada
3rd Grade Teacher
Pohakea Elementary School

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

TESTIMONY

Eren Padilla <eren.padilla@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:22 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

DISCUSSION ITEM VI(A)

HELLO, B.O.E., my name is Eren Star Padilla and I am a proud Art Educator at McKinley HS in Honolulu.

I am formally testifying IN FAVOR of 6' social distancing rules in my room and frankly, the whole state.

Here are my other demands:
1. Covid19 Testing 3 days - 1 week before school school starts for EVERY person on campus
2. Quarantine - isolation room on campus that is NOT the nurses office thats dedicated to SARS2 Covid
3. MANDATORY stay at home for any child sick with anything including cold, flu, pink eye, etc
4. EVERYONE WEARS MASKS 100% of time except when socially distanced outdoors and / or exercizing

I HAVE ASTHMA and every one of my students and nearby coworkers in neighboring classrooms has personally witnessed my attacks triggered by weekly grass cutting, landscaping, pollution, vog and stress / anxiety.

I'm really afraid to go back to work

Thank you for your time

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

Testimony

Maile Akiona <mjakiona@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:22 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this concerns:

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 **Maile Akiona** and I am speaking as both a parent as well as a teacher. I have taught at **Aiea Elementary** School for **21 years** now and my children attend Kamehameha Schools.

During the pandemic, I have followed the "Stay at home" order and all guidelines recommended by the CDC, State Health Department, and state officials. Me and my family made the necessary adjustments for living the "new normal". During this time of crisis, we learned of three personal friends who got COVID-19 (All travel related). Two have recovered and one is still fighting for his life, he was featured on the news recently. A retired Fire Captain for the Honolulu Fire Department. The other two were a orthopedic surgeon here at Straub and a close family friend who is a Captain in Rescue for the Calgary Fire Department. These are three of our close friends and I am not about to have anyone else catch COVID.

As we get ready for the reopening of schools, I am very concerned for the safety of myself as well as all teachers and students. First, I am **not** in agreement with the proposed "3 feet of distance" between students and teachers. It would be totally irresponsible to allow that in schools. There should be a minimum of 6 feet between desks or tables. And classroom size needs to be reduced to allow small groups that attend school on a rotation. Second, I am **not** in agreement that teachers and students don't need to wear masks. There is a mandate to wear masks in all public places. Schools need to follow the mandate too. Finally, schools should be provided with **Sneeze Guards** for classrooms not just the administration buildings. The classrooms are where the greatest level of risk are located. Statistics say that **exposure is at higher risk** when around people for longer periods. Teachers will be with their students for **6** hours each day!

I humbly ask that you consider these concerns. Please **do what is right** for the safety of all who believe in providing and receiving a quality education. Please do not put our teachers and students at risk of contacting COVID.

Yours In Education,
Maile Akiona
Teacher
Aiea 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 Jensen Apana and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Moanalua High School and my child attends Salt Lake 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 ESY this summer and attempted the 3-foot distance between desks. This was with only 5 students and 5 adults in my class. I can’t imagine doing it with a whole class of 12+ students and 3+ adults.

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. 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 3-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 6-foot 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,

Jensen Apana

Gmail

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

mask rules and distance

Fawn Ali <ncfoze@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:23 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a special education teacher employed by the DOE. I am truly concerned that students will not properly wear their masks but teachers are required to wear masks. It is crucial that ALL people on campus wear a mask to protect the health of others. Mask wearing should not be an option, it should be mandatory for all students and staff. In addition, the CDC recommends 6 foot distance as a safety measure. If students are only three feet apart, this goes against what the highest health organizations has been telling us for months. Safety should come first for students and Staff. We need to keep the social distancing of 6 feet.

Fawzia Ali

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Karrie Arquette <karriearquette@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:24 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**.

Aloha! My name is Karrie U'i Arquette and I am a CTE teacher, teaching Home Economics & Fashion Design at Wai'anae High School. My children attend Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao PCS in Nānākuli. They will be starting 2nd grade there.

The health and protection of our students and teachers should be prioritized over the economics of this pandemic. The three-foot distancing policy instead of the six-foot standard agreed upon with HSTA shows just little regard for the health and safety of students as well as teachers.

At the start of this pandemic, teachers were expected to traverse the unknown and we rose to the occassion with very little support as well as having to balance our own households. Despite our efforts, we are being treated as guinea pigs. We will go to great lengths to support our students, going above and beyond our actual duties because we are teachers. But we should not be expected to die doing our jobs.

Please consider the health and safety of our students (our own keiki included), our teachers and our communities.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

K. U'i Arquette

Concerned parent, teacher and community member (who has firmly adhered to state quarantine mandates to keep my family safe.)

Gmail

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

Testimony

Gina Cacchioli <gcacchioli@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Gina Cacchioli, a second grade teacher at Makaha Elementary in the Nanakuli/ Waianae complex. I am emailing 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 believe that teaching lower grades, for example my second graders, would be best suited in a face to face environment. I am happy to go back to school to teach Hawaii's youth in the safest environment possible. Only requiring a social distance of 3 feet is not sufficient enough to keep the school staff and students, as well as families of students at home safe. Additionally, masks should be worn, as this disease of COVID-19 is spread mostly through sneezes and coughs. Using masks prevents the spread of this disease, helping us to all maintain health.

The CDC requires these guidelines, and schools should follow them as well to best protect the safety of everyone at the Hawaii schools. Please enforce these recommendations as the rest of public stores and offices outside of the DOE are doing.

Thank you.

Best,
Gina Cacchioli

Reopening Schools

Nicole Nakasuji <nicole.nakasuji@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

As an educator for the past 16 years, I definitely agree that holding in person classes is in many ways much more effective than distance learning. However I am one of many in the high risk category and am very wary about returning to in person classes in the next couple of weeks. I believe that the "ohana bubble" concept is more feasible at the elementary level where students stay with the same class all day, but at the high school level does not make sense. I do appreciate how you are allowing each school to come up with their own proposal based on their campus and population size but because I work at a large high school campus I am not comfortable with our school's plan to return. I do not think the Board has fully thought through all the issues that will be involved and just want to share some of my concerns.

For our school it has been proposed that the student body will be broken into four groups. This equates to approximately 500 students on campus at once plus all the faculty/staff. We all know that teenagers in general like to push boundaries and in their passing time, recess, and lunch are going to be close to impossible to keep socially distant. In addition with 7 periods, they are going to inevitably intermingle with a large "bubble" of people and thus expose us as teachers to that bubble. As the CDC has said, each person you interact with is like exposing yourself to all the people they have interacted with in the past two weeks. If I catch COVID-19, news reports have stated that I am 12x more likely to die. If we're going to return to in person, even in reduced numbers, there needs to be mandates about the number of people, wearing masks, staying 6 feet apart, and there needs to be sanitation of classrooms between periods.

I understand that we want to return to in person and allow for the building of relationships but for the format my school is proposing, students will be on campus once every two weeks which means we will see them about four times per quarter. Learning names/faces, let alone building relationships, is going to be more than challenging. At the same time you need to consider the amount of time it takes to recreate curriculum for distance learning. During this past fourth quarter it took me 1-3 full work days to create new digital assignments, find appropriate YouTube videos, or create new slide sets to be posted in Classroom and 1-5 days to assess one assignment. This was when I had 5 full work days to focus on only that and still worked in the hours beyond the school day. If we return to a hybrid format I'm now going to have to plan for both in person and distance learning. I'm going to have to spend 4 out 5 days (based on my school's proposal) running in person school but somehow find a way to create/run distance learning for the other 3/4 of my students during that 5th day of the week. I will be seeing these different groups of students at different points in the two week cycle. So what I plan for someone at the beginning of the two weeks of distance learning might not make sense for the group I see at the end of the two weeks. There are so many things to process and the brain power this is going to take is honestly making me want to walk away from the profession.

I love my students and my school community but I do not want to put my life at risk for them. I feel like the additional stress and amount of time/work this new model is going to take, on top of not having clearly required/defined health practices in place (i.e. mandatory masks, sanitation between each new group of students (500 is too big a group to consider an "ohana bubble"), mandatory 6 feet of distance) is just asking for higher infection rates. Until there is a vaccine or a proven effective treatment protocol in place, I am not ok with risking my health and safety and am dreading returning to school in the fall. Teachers in general give above and beyond for their profession, but asking them to give their lives and the lives of their family members is asking too much. Please think about this.

Sincerely,
Nicole Nakasuji

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

Testimony

Rachael Schultz <rachael.schultz@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 3:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rachael Schultz, and I am an English teacher at Maui High School. I am writing regarding Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year." Specifically, I am writing in response to the Department of Education's announcement that schools may reopen with students no more than three feet apart.

This announcement violates the Memorandum of Understanding between the DOE and the Hawaii State Teachers Association. The agreement calls for six feet apart which 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 six foot distance between students, separation at all times will be difficult to maintain. By reducing that space to three 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 anxiety going through the minds of my colleagues who teach at the middle and elementary levels.

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. However, 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 fine with 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 not considered in the high-risk category, but who closely interacts with those who are at-risk. People I consider family. This scenario will force me to isolate myself from them to our mutual detriment. In addition, this has made me seriously question whether or not I would be willing to continue teaching in Hawai'i, and I am in my sixth year with the DOE.

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. The primary focus for the 2020-2021 School Year must be the overall safety of the students, teachers, and families.

Therefore, 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.

Sincerely,

Rachael Schultz

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

(no subject)

Chantel Cervantes <mzchan808@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:28 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha my name is Chantel Souza I am a single mom of 4. I have a 10 year old daughter that was born premature. Her immune system Is not strong. I highly disagree with what the DOE has planned for the return of our keiki. I will not allow any of my children to return. It's concerning that the DOE would allow our keiki to return when CDC has mandated that we stay six feet apart. How is it ok to send our keiki into these type of settings? I kindly ask you to please come up with other ways for our keiki to learn in a safe environment. Thank you for your time.

Chantel Souza

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

testimony

Cheryl Takushi <kushic71@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to present testimony 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 Cheryl Takushi and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Mililani Waena Elementary. I am writing to address the opening of the 2020-2021 school year.
I have been very impressed with our government's and our leadership's decisions to keep our students and staff safe during this time of the pandemic. Unfortunately, I no longer feel that student safety and well being is at the forefront of the decisions being made about how we are going to return to school. I understand that there must be a compromise when we are returning to school due to the physical limitations that school structures have and the importance of students having quality instruction. However, I think that having students sitting facing forward and at three feet away is not an environment that is safe for students. The reality is that elementary school students, especially ones that are under the age of 8, have a difficult time with knowing what is a safe distance to stay away from another person. I know that part of my job this year will be teaching my Kindergarten students hygiene and what social distancing is at school. If my students are already six feet apart, it will make it less stressful for them if they drop a school supply on the floor. This was a concern for me when I taught at the summer learning hub at my school. I got to see first hand that with six foot distance, the students would be at a lower risk of being close to each other. This will also help them understand how far they should be when they are around each other because they will be able to see first hand how far six feet is when sitting in the classroom. I know that the reality is that we cannot prevent the students and staff from feeling stress when returning from school but, if we can provide a safer environment, it may be less stressful of a transition. Thank you and I appreciate your time and attention to my letter.

Respectfully,
Cheryl Takushi

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kervin Oshima <dakreat@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:29 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 a teacher, athletic coach at Waianae High School for over 20+ years. THIS IS MY FIRST TIME DOING THIS!!!

I cannot believe you are making your own guidelines disregarding CDCs recommendation of 6ft distance!! How is it 6ft between me and the next customer at FOODLAND but not for our schools?? How is it at McDonalds drive through I still gotta wear a mask to pick up food BUT in our classroom NO NEED??

This 3ft and no need wear mask is RIDICULOUS and putting everyone in UNNECESSARY danger!!

How did you come up with this 3ft and no mask idea?? We as teachers need to base our lessons on best practices and we teach our kids to support their claims w/verifiable information NOT SOCIAL MEDIA or WIKIPEDIA

ALL SCIENTIFIC DATA SAYS 6FT +MASKS

if you want 3ft and no mask THEN U COME TO MY SCHOOL MY CLASS AND TEACH

PS: how come in your BOE and ALL OTHER STATE FUNCTIONS ITS 6ft + MASK??

I’m just saying!!!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Implement 6 ft. social distance rule

Cua Annie <lcua88@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Lianne Cua and I am a teacher at Wilcox Elementary School. I am also the mother of a student at Kauai High School. I am writing on behalf of myself as both a PARENT AND a TEACHER.

I am absolutely against the Superintendent's plan to allow school reopening with only a measly 3 ft social distancing requirement. Our local governments, as well as the CDC, are in support of 6 ft social distancing guidelines, so why should school open with only a 3 ft social distancing guideline, thereby endangering the lives of not just the students and school staff, but also their families?! As we are seeing in the local news, kids ARE testing positive for COVID-19, and ARE carriers of the virus. Kekaha School on the island of Kauai recently went back to online teaching for their summer school program when one of their students recently tested positive. A Summer Fun official recently tested positive on Oahu, but fortunately, she was not in direct contact with children. I am positive we would've seen more of a backlash from parents if that was the case. I already know of parents who are planning to homeschool their children because they do not feel the DOE is taking appropriate steps to keep their children safe in the school environment. It hurts to see people going to extreme levels because they feel their child is unsafe at school, when the truth of the matter is, we deeply care for their safety and well-being.

My own children are considered high risk, with all 3 having asthma, and one of them suffered a stroke last year at the age of 16. I also care for my elderly parents, who are both in their 80's, and one has many underlying health conditions. Please mandate at least a 6 ft social distancing plan to keep EVERYONE (even those who are not directly in the school environment) safe. Let's all be a part of the most responsible and safest plan for school reopenings here in Hawaii, with the safety of not just our school Ohana, but our entire state in mind (knowing how easily this virus can be community spread).

Thank you very much for taking the time to listen and for your consideration in this matter. Please be safe and stay healthy.

Lianne Cua
DOE Teacher and Parent

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Laua'e Y <lauaehula@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the BOE

I am a DOE employee, a mother and a Kumu Hula. I am asking you to enforce the use of CDC guidelines when reopening the schools.

3 feet distancing is NOT acceptable to me and I am definitely not comfortable at all with it. Why are universities and local businesses mandated to have at LEAST 6 feet distancing, yet our schools do not? None of it makes sense and is absolutely unacceptable.

In regards to the use of masks...why is it mandatory when the kids are outside yet when in a closed classroom with recycled air or little circulation it is not mandatory? That makes no sense either! Yet the teacher MUST wear a mask?! Has the DOE not seen the data?!

As a parent and educator, I definitely want to see my students and I want my child to be able to go to school as well. I know the importance of being in school face to face with their teachers and peers. However, if ALL parties are not held to the same common CDC standards, it is NOT SAFE.

I am always willing to see the bigger picture and work for the benefit of our students. But where in any contract does it say that my health and safety should be jeopardized?

The DOE plans seem unregulated and haphazardly thrown together. Please, for the sake of our students and staff, I implore you the BOE to make the decision to keep ALL OF US SAFE.

Mahalo
Sheri Yamasaki

Gmail

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

Testimony

Paul McDonnell <mrmcdo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:31 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

My name is Paul McDonnell and I'm a teacher at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind. It was my understanding that the state agreed to follow CDC's 6 ft spacing recommendation, but now I'm hearing that the DOE is going back on the agreement and cutting the distance in half to only 3 feet.

This concerns me greatly as COVID-19 is a clear and present danger to everybody at school and all reasonable effort should be taken to minimize the spread of this virus. Please ensure that my school is safe for my students and my fellow teachers by requiring 6' space between everybody at all times on campus.

Thank you,

Paul McDonnell

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kaitlyn Aure <kaitlyncaure@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:32 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kaitlyn Aure and I am a concerned 5th grade teacher, parent, and Maui resident writing to you in hope that you will stand alongside our keiki, schools, and community when it comes to proper social distancing protocols in our schools. Unfortunately, I am at a loss at how to even start this letter. I do not understand how the DOE is willing to put the students, staff, and our community at risk. 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**, yet the DOE has created the **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year** that states that the schools only need 3-feet. How can we put our students at risk? Why do people at a restaurant or at a store have to follow the 6-foot rule, but our schools only 3-feet? Anyone who has worked with students, especially elementary students, knows that 3 feet could never be enough. Furthermore, the CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19- the HIGHEST RISK. Why would we ever want that to happen to students, our children, those who do not have a voice in this matter and that cannot protect themselves? Staggering statistics and scientific data are coming in discussing COVID-19's impact on children as well as how it is now correlated to Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome. I would not be willing to sacrifice my son or any of my students to this virus, especially after the DOE has discussed this matter and agreed with the HSTA to this basic request. We- the mothers, fathers, aunties, uncles, kapuna, and guardians- need to protect our keiki, especially before it is too late. A child cannot get an education, if the virus takes their life.

Next, we need to protect our teachers and staff. It brings me to tears that I am not being protected and we are being thrown on the frontlines with little protection or precaution. What is my life worth? Is 3-feet really worth my life, my boyfriend's life, or the life of my sweet one year old son? If I become sick due to a lack of distance and exposure in the classroom is it fair that I have to be quarantined and away from my son until a negative test? Is it right that he doesn't get to have his mother around whether it is temporarily or permanently? What about my father-in-law that is immunocompromised? If I go back to school does that mean I have to cut off my connection with my family members? Or what about the loss of the life of any of our staff members at risk? Or perhaps the pregnant mothers or soon to be parents? And, more frankly, let's just consider all of the staff that put students first. How can this even be a possible scenario that we find ourselves in in this day and age? How can this be justified or acceptable that the DOE is willing to put people, anyone from our islands, at risk? Education is essential and one of our greatest needs, but it is not worth our health and certainly not worth our lives. I sincerely ask you to reconsider the DOE's proposal and mandate their agreement with the HSTA. This is a matter of life and death and it is your responsibility to protect Hawaii. Please protect us.

Mahalo for your time,
Kaitlyn Aure

5th Grade Teacher
King Kamehameha III Elementary

Gmail

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

Teacher and Student Safety

Lisa Nakama <nakamalisa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:32 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, thank you for allowing us to share our testimony regarding social distancing when the school year begins.

I'm a second grade teacher. When planning for the students' return, I am pleading that we have a 6ft distance between students. Our second graders will be incredibly excited to see each other, and they will need more space between them to keep then separated. Three feet of space, especially without masks, will be difficult to keep our keiki safe. They would easily be able to turn around and get to close to each other.

I appreciate your consideration of extending the spacing from 3 to 6 ft.

Thank you,
Lisa Nakama
Gr. 2
Momilani El.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Emmanette Haiola <japel.emm@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:33 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Emmanette Haiola an educator and a parent of two teenagers at Kahuku High and Intermediate School. I agree the importance of six feet social distancing at my work place and for the safety of my children and students.

Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

6 feet

Nunie Lady <nunielady99@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I am a concerned parent and special education teacher. I do not feel comfortable sending my child to school if the 6 foot social distancing and masks are not in place. I am a single working parent. If my child or I were to become ill, I would need to leave my job. Please help support children, students, families and the community by providing the 6 foot social distancing, face masks and for SPED teachers face shields.

Note: As a special education teacher, I feel more supports are needed to help special education teachers as they service students. Many of my 13 FSC students have severe health issues such as asthma, sinus, bronchial, etc. Masks and shields are needed as the students sneeze often.

In addition, 5 of my students have difficulty staying seated for up to 5 to 10 minutes at a time and my room is small. How will you be supporting FSC classes when they are provided less adult support, given a small room and asked to provide face to face full day? As well as asking these teachers to keep students seated: facing forward for the entire day and not having/allowing them to walk around the class. Please note we are also working on hygiene skills which require sped teachers and EA's to be closer to students. How will you support us with these concerns?

Lastly, how will this work for sped fsc pre school classes that have over 10 students and only two maybe three adults? What are the preschool protocols? Do all fsc preschoolers come at one time? Again, what about hygiene/toileting?

Please support us in keeping students, faculty and staff safe.

Respectfully,

A concerned parent and special education teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kealakai Lindsey-Meyer <kealakai7@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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. As I teacher and parent of a child at Chiefess Kamakahelei, I am very concerned for the health and safety of myself, my child and the students I teach. Please reconsider the current 3' distancing seating arrangement that the DOE is implementing.

Mahalo,
Kealakai Lindsey-Meyer
Waimea High School, SPEd Teacher

testimony - reopening schools plan 20-21 school year

L Ginoza <babyginoza@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:35 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing to you to express my extreme concern over the recommendations that Health Director Bruce Anderson and Dr. Kishimoto are making for the opening of school. I strongly feel that their recommendations put our students, teachers, and families at risk.

Currently the suggested distancing for schools is 3 feet in the classroom. It was also said that masks would not need to be worn in the classroom. This goes counter to what is being told to the general public.

From the Honolulu Star advertiser – July 3rd, 2020
“As the state continues to reopen businesses and rebuild the economy, controlling the spread of COVID-19 will be the key to moving forward,” said Health Director Bruce Anderson. “Controlling the spread of the virus requires everyone to wear a face covering whenever they are out and avoid crowded places, closed spaces, and close contact with those outside of their household.”

If our intent is to reopen schools safely how can we justify health recommendations about masks and social distancing that go against what is seen as safe? Why is it that it’s ok for our students and teachers to go without a mask in a school setting that is a crowded, closed space, that exposes people to close contact to those outside of their household? In addition to open our schools with student desks at 3 feet is further asking for the spread of COVID -19. If you work with children you will realize that they can not sit still and face forward for long. Due to their age they are also likely to cough, sneeze and spray bodily fluids with out regard for hygiene.

Hawaii has one of the lowest COVID -19 counts in the nation. We were able to achieve that low number due the precautions we took. Let’s not put all that to waste by opening schools in a manner that is not safe.

Sincerely,
Laura Ginoza

Gmail

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

Testimony

ms buck <msmbuck29@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:35 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 Michelle Buck. I teach at Na`alehu Elementary School in Ka`u. Please reconsider your position on allowing 3-foot distancing in classrooms. This is not acceptable.

Michelle Buck
Na`alehu Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Chelsea Holland <cholland818@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Chelsea Nacapuy. I am 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.

This directly contradicts our agreement with the state and 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.”

Today it was reported that there were 41 new positive cases for Covid-19. That is the highest number this state has seen. The reason for many of those cases is people not social distancing and not wearing a mask. Exactly what is going to happen in schools. Why is it that everywhere else you go right now it is recommended you social distance by at least 6 feet, but schools are 3 feet? Students have never had to socially distance themselves, especially in the school environment.

As someone who has a husband who is high risk and an eight month old daughter, I do not feel safe returning to school with students who are not required to wear a mask and only distanced 3 feet. Recommending 3 foot distance is putting teachers and students in danger.

Please follow our agreement by recommending six foot distancing.

Thank you,

Chelsea Nacapuy

Gmail

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

Testimony- online to start

Heather Chapple <hkwiatkowski@waialae.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:37 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Today, we broke the record for covid cases on Oahu (41). Only months ago, doe stated school closure until no new cases for 4 weeks. Now, teachers in Hawaii are being asked to be on the frontlines as our public schools are the first to open in the nation, amid rising cases and the state opening to tourists.

We as teachers are always thinking of our keiki; we understand the need for connection, social interaction, and the school environment. We also miss our students, and want to get back to normal. I worry if we open prematurely, we may increase the spread and may never get to that point.

In light of the current increasing spike in covid, it would be wise to start school by implementing online instruction for most students.

Our actions should reflect what is happening in our community. Please consider having students learn online until our covid numbers decrease, for the safety of the students and their ohana, staff and community.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nancy Usher <jinglesusher@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:38 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 very disturbed that the Department of Education is not strictly abiding by the CDC guidelines of having six feet between persons. I am a teacher who falls under the high risk category and I am scared of when school opens up again that my students and I will be exposed to a dangerous situation on campus if a six foot distance is not strictly adhered to. Please keep our students and teachers safe and mandate that all schools will abide by a safe distancing policy of six feet between all persons at all times at schools. Also masks must be worn while on the school campus at all times by both students and staff to keep everyone safe. I work at Hilo High School.

Thank you,
Nancy Usher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Maile W <mailewikum@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:39 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 Maile Wikum and I live on the Big Island teaching at Konawaena Elementary School as a Librarian. My child attends Ke Kula o Ehunuikaimalino DOE school and I am very concerned for us both.
I am asking that the contractual agreement that was reached with our HSTA having classrooms configured with six feet between student desks and students should be wearing their masks as much as possible. I don't feel safe returning to teaching if they are only three feet apart and especially if they are not wearing masks. I have many health issues with auto immune conditions which make it easy for me to catch sicknesses. I would feel much safer for all the students, their families and myself if we followed the CDC guidelines and not make up our own "safety" guidelines just so more students can return. Safety should be first in our schools.
I am very unsure about my daughter returning to her school as well. We have heard nothing yet from the school and the campus is so small that I am not sure what they are planning just yet. They are a growing school and my daughter was in the first class that had two classes worth if students. Knowing this I need to be reassured that they have safe procedures in place before I decide to send her back. I am sure many parents feel the same. Please honor the contractual agreement that was decided on. Thank you for hearing this testimony.
Mahalo,
Maile Wikum

Gmail

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

Testimony

RHS <tatiana.chauvet-martin@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Tatiana Chauvet-Martin and I am a teacher at the Roosevelt High School. My daughter attends the same 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.

As a person at risk and having a child in the public school system, I feel that "the health and safety of students and staff is the most important concern of the public education system" and 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 also feel that everyone present on school grounds should wear a mask to minimize the risk of spreading the virus.
People should not be forced to go to work in fear of getting sick and put their family, colleagues, and students at risk.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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

Mask and Distance Rules in School

Eiger Kim <eigerkim@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:41 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am 65 years old teacher at the HSDB.
I cannot go back to school to teach students because of new mask rules and 3 feet distance in school.
I am afraid of getting COVID19 in school.
If DOE cannot insure my safety from COVID19, I am ready to retire.
Mahalo
Sung

Gmail

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

(no subject)

William Mimura <macdaddysatan@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:42 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Do we get temporary hazardous pay,with the higher increase of COVID-19 cases.
Are all workers able to monitor children gathering on non class times.(social distancing)
How are we to keep safety against A Symptomatic kids/adults.
Better monitoring of kids on restroom breaks by teachers
Stop Photography class from wondering around campus unsupervised
P.E. has close contact physically, breathing, sweating, etc.
Mass amounts of kids during lunch,
Not enough space for distancing.
After school sports and practices gathers.
If a person with virus is identified, will
Only casses person was in be notified and why not the rest of school. Person walks around all campus, everyone should be notified. Not like in the past , only immediate teachers and classes.
How are you going to be able to completely sanitize entire campus daily and who will actually/honestly monitor this.

Gmail

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

Fwd: Testimony

Chris Bothmer <bothmerc@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:42 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 Christine Bothmer-Stinson and I teach Life Sciences at Ka'u High School & Pahala Elementary.

The 3-foot rule for social distancing is not acceptable for several reasons: it is unrealistic to expect students sit quietly, facing forward for an entire class period, and how would it possibly be adequately enforced?

Opening windows to promote air circulation is short-sighted. The unbearable heat has driven many schools to install air conditioning, since the stifling heat and humidity makes it hard to learn. But now we'll open those windows and got back to poor learning caused by the heat?

This is a great opportunity (apologies for font change) to seriously diversify our concept of a school. For many, school is a place of camaraderie and learning. For many others, it is a nightmare that leaves lasting emotional trauma. We should make the internet a public utility and provide for a 100% option for kids to earn a HS diploma online with blended instruction for at-risk students, and consider returning to in-person instruction for all who want it in 2021-2022 school year. Let's truly address student safety and diversity in this way.

Thank you,
Christine Bothmer-Stinson
Kau High School & Pahala Elementary

Gmail

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

"Testimony"

Renee Kaneshiro <jasaiko@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I would like to address the 3 feet implementation distancing rule where students are facing forward and optional face covering requirement. I am a second grade teacher and will be having 20 students in my class. It will be literally impossible to implement the 6 feet rule so my principal will be using the 3 feet rule having the students desk facing towards the front of the class. Students will not be able to only face forward toward the whole day.
As news breaks, there's an update that the Covid-19 is airborne and even the 6 feet rule is not enough. **Experts says the virus can stay in the air, as water droplets up to 6 feet spread and aerosols can travel more than 30 feet. They recommend wearing mask and social distancing indoors.**

--
LIve, Laugh, Love, Renee

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kim Dempsey <kim.dempsey@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:45 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

Looking at the MOU, my biggest concern is masks and 3 ft distancing.

Masks outside The classroom only is counterintuitive to the role and functionality of masks.

I understand that 6 feet is face to face and 3 feet is acceptable “shoulder to shoulder”. With that, it is not reasonable to assume that students will not be facing each other during conversation.

Models were conceived to minimize risk to students. The standards set with masks and distance discounts this effort.

In addition to my above concerns, I also feel that teacher safety was not at the forefront of the models. Within any given week we will see our entire roster.

Mahalo nui loa.

Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony

Mahina Komeiji <mahinakomeiji@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi
I am not a high risk person, however, I do come into contact with people who are. I don't think the 3 feet rule and no masks is going to work out. Today alone we had 41 cases of the virus. We haven't even had tourists back. In addition, I work at a military populated school. Some of which just PCS'd in and did not have to quarantine. I'm against reopening under these guidelines.

--
Mahina Komeiji
Mahina.Komeiji@gmail.com
(808)392-5504

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

Testimony

Joanna B Kobayashi <joannabkobayashi@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:45 AM
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 Joanna Kobayashi and I teach at Moanalua High School. I have a 9 year old that attends private school and a 3 year old who attends preschool.

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.

HSTA has advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a memorandum of understanding 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."

The current 3ft minimum is unacceptable. Along with the fact that students are NOT required to wear masks. My 3 year old is slated to start preschool in August and even she is required to wear a face mask except when napping and eating.

As a community, we need to make sacrifices. Teachers, schools, parents, and students alike. That is our responsibility as citizens.

For the health of our students, our schools and as a result, our community, please advocate for the 6 ft separation in classes and that all students who are able, wear face masks.

Aloha,

Joanna Kobayashi

Aloha,

I am providing 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. My name is Emily Brou and I am speaking both as a teacher and as a parent. I am a teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School and have two young children who will both be attending daycare upon my return to work. I have multiple issues with the proposed reopening plans for public schools. The 3-foot social distancing, visual health checks, immediate standardized testing, and “no more than 2 students per bench” on a bus are all problematic to me.

As a teacher, I am not confident that the designated 3-feet social distancing measure that is proposed will be enough in a classroom setting. This distance does not allow the space to keep children far enough away from each other to keep them safe. If children are just 3-feet apart, they could easily reach out and touch their neighbor. We cannot expect children to only face one direction all day, not turn to talk to their peers, not lean over and attempt to borrow school supplies; these are all things that 3-feet of spacing would easily allow, but 6-feet distancing makes it more difficult for the children, therefore limiting the occurrence. 6-feet apart will keep our keiki and therefore, their families, more safe.

If children are just 3-feet apart, the teacher cannot safely walk between them to traverse the classroom. If I cannot safely walk around my classroom, one of two things will occur (or both). First, I might be left with the choice to stay up at the front of the room to keep myself safe. If I were to teach from the front of the room and never walk around, that negatively affects the education of my students. We know that a student centered classroom best promotes learning, and if I remain at the front, I remain as center of attention, thus creating a teacher centered learning environment. Second, with the close quarters, I risk being exposed to the virus as one student could unknowingly transmit it to me if I walk as close to them as the 3-foot distancing will force me to. If I am exposed, I will then expose both of my children, who will each then expose a room of 8 infants, and a room of 8 toddlers at daycare respectively. Also, if I am exposed, I will expose my husband who is active duty military; he will then expose all of the people he works with and we will then have a spiral through our military members. 6-feet distancing does not guarantee my safety, but it puts me at a much lower risk than 3-feet.

Next, I am an educator, I am not a healthcare professional. Hence, expecting me or my peers to know the signs and symptoms of the flu, or covid is irresponsible on the part of the BOE. We cannot be expected to check our students' health upon their entry into the school, as we are not educated in that department. Do we want healthcare workers attempting to educate our students? No. They are not qualified in that realm, just as we are not qualified in their profession. We need a better solution than visual checks by teachers for an entry screening on our students; temperature checks would be a more effective solution, understanding that those checks are also not foolproof, although more accurate than the opinion of educators. Visual checks by teachers are ultimately just asking us for our opinion; an opinion not backed up by experience or factual understanding.

Next on my list is the concern of immediately testing our students. I am going to come at this topic purely from an emotional standing as I certainly hope you are educated enough to already know the scientifically proven reasons as to why this is a bad idea any year, let alone a year where our children have been and are currently going through unprecedented times. Our children are coming back to education after being forced out unexpectedly. We sent our students home for one week of spring break and then never brought them back to a brick and mortar school; and for many of our children, especially at my school, the distance learning was a joke, and not beneficial or feasible for many. We are going to put a test in front of these kids who haven’t studied math or ELA in approximately 5 months and expect it not to affect their psyche? No. We know that is not morally right. By testing these kids, we are telling them that all that matters right now is us finding out how much they don’t know about math and ELA.

Honestly, their downfalls in those departments should be the least of our concerns in the first two weeks of school. We should be spending that time reacclimating them to their school, teaching them better health and safety practices and checking in on their emotions and mental well-being. We cannot professionally say that testing children in their first two weeks after a detrimental pandemic is the best thing for the whole child. We do not need data so desperately that we need to risk the stability of our children. Testing needs to be pushed into the month of September. We need to give our children time to adjust to their new normal before we can expect them to be able to focus and perform on a test. The data would then be more accurate for teachers and give us a better picture of their standings. I truly believe that the data we might receive if given in the first two weeks would be extremely skewed due to the current situation we are all living in.

My last concern is the following line that I have read regarding the buses in our state. “No more than 2 per bench” on the bus is just changing us from having overcrowded buses, to using our buses at capacity. Now, using our buses at capacity, rather than over capacity is a great thing that should have been going on all along. Unfortunately, capacity is certainly not the environment to help stop the spread of this deadly virus. There are many states choosing to seat one child on every other bench to help with the spread of germs, but Hawaii believes sitting kids directly beside each other is a good idea? We’re going to transport students like sardines on a bus to get to and from school and then space them out at school? This ultimately negates the purpose of socially distancing the children at the school because they’re just going to infect each other on the bus.

Getting our children back at school and learning is important, but their health (mental and physical) and safety is vastly more important. If we are putting in the measure to protect the children as much as we can, we in turn are not putting in the measures to protect the teachers and staff at every school either. There is no point in reopening schools at a low safety level because we will just quickly and rapidly spread the virus and schools will be shut down again. It would be better to open our schools as minimally and safely as possible to be able to keep them open, rather than rashly open them and very soon have to shut them down again because we did things incorrectly. Please put deep consideration into the points that I have brought up in this testimony and rethink the way that we plan to do things as a state. We teachers, staff and our students are at your mercy; do not take that lightly.

Gmail

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

Discussion Item VI(A)

Bridget Moniz <bridgetmoniz@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

It is with a heavy heart I write my first testimony in this discussion. My name is Bridget Moniz and I am a current teacher at Waianae High School. I have been an educator for the last 7 years transitioning to education as a second career. My daughter also attends Waianae high school.

I have grave concerns regarding the opening of schools and classrooms, more specifically the 3ft. Rule and no mask. The Covid cases are increasing daily since the State started to re-open some businesses and it is increasingly alarming. During the emergency mandate everyone now needs to wear a mask in public! How is it the students, schools and teachers are exempt from this rule? Just yesterday during the press conference government leaders appealed to the community on wearing mask, limit gatherings to 10 or less etc.
if schools are to re-open and these safety issues are not addressed the health and safety for ALL is compromised.
The State and DOE needs to adhere to its own message to the public about 6 ft social distancing and mask guidelines. It will be a tragedy if Covid was to appear when we re opened in any of our staff or students.
Learn from the Summer pals program who has way less kids and yet an employee tested positive.
Please think not only of our staff and students but also their households with whom they will come in contact with.

We need to ensure we have a plan that is the best for everyone and the current proposal of no mask and 3 ft. Doesn't cut it. If this the best that DOE can come up with push the opening of the school year until September. Use this time to watch as the State opens ups for mainland travelers and plan for a Better safe environment. We deserve nothing less and our students and their families deserve to be protected as well.

Do not let the pressing need of opening up or politics guide your thinking. We need to ensure everyone is safe and this plan is not it! I'm ashamed that it's even a thought especially with the CDC guidelines and government pleas on 6 ft social distancing and mask requirements.

DOE has a wealth of knowledge at their disposal to think and plan, use it.

Mahalo,

Bridget

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

leigh Yokoyama <positiveleigh@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:
I am sending in 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 son will be in the 4th grade at Moanalua Elementary School. I am extremely concerned about him returning to the regular education classroom in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. Since the pandemic closures started in March 2020, our family has been very diligent in making sure that we practice social distancing, mask wearing, and handwashing to prevent our family from contracting this virus. There are 5 people total who live in my household, and 3 of 5 family members are categorized as "high risk" for contracting (and dying from) this deadly disease. Yes, perhaps the WHO and CDC recommend a minimum of 3 feet between children in the classroom, however, studies have shown repeatedly that airborne droplets can travel more than 3 feet. No where else has 3 feet been an acceptable minimum distance, so why is it OK for our children and teachers? I absolutely do not think that the health/welfare of the children or teachers are being taken into consideration as a top priority.

Education of our children is needed, but during the time of a pandemic where little is known about the virus, there needs to be a different answer than send all of the children back into the classroom. I am proposing that perhaps children who have internet access/childcare at home for the 2020-2021 school year continue to be educated via web-based schooling. Children who do not have internet access/childcare can return to school. This would reduce the number of children in school, thus perhaps allowing there to be at least 6 feet between students. Similarly, the teachers who are web savvy can teach the web based classroom, and those who are not, can teach in the classroom. Sending children into school on a "track system" (alternating days, etc) still increases their chances of contracting the disease when the BEST way of minimizing exposure is to stay at home. Please take the time to consider the concerns of parents and teachers who fear for the lives of their children and themselves. This is NOT like the flu. We have never seen this virus before as a planet. Please don't rush back to get to "normal" when life is not "normal." It is NOT pono to play russian roulette with our children and teachers in the form of sending everyone back to the regular classroom environment.

Thank you for your time,
Leigh Yokoyama-Arakaki

Gmail

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

(no subject)

John Villiarimo <johnvilliarimo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Welina me ke aloha,

I want to take this opportunity to share my concerns regarding 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 John Villiarimo and I am a father of two, one being a 7-year student and the other of preschool age here on the island of Molokai. It is extremely concerning to me that the DOE is looking at allowing for a 3-feet distancing guideline for the school year. How can we assure our students, teachers, and other school staff are safe with only 3 feet separating them? We hear on the news and throughout social media that the CDC requires at least 6-feet social distancing, and yet, here we are with only 3-feet for our schools? We all know, with our younger students, they will be more likely to want to take their masks off during school, play around, and not abide by the social distancing guidelines, simply because they are young children. This doens‘t just put our children at risk, but the teachers and staff as well.

I strongly urge this body to really look at this comprehensive plan with a fine-tooth comb to ensure everyone‘s safety. I want nothing more than my children to be in school getting an enriching and quality education, but not at the expense of their safety or anyone else‘s safety.

Na‘u nō,
John Villiarimo
Kāla‘e, Molokai

Sender notified by
Mailtrack

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

sinceletom <cecile.oshima@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I, Cecile Oshima, am testifying on Discussion item VI(A):... as an elderly educator with over 50 years at Kahuku High and Intermediate School Library, I love my school, students, staff, and community. To not comply with the 6 foot distance and not mask wearing is unbelievable. I sincerely believe hat we must follow the 6 ft and all wear mask procedures at school. Although this method is not 100% guaranteed for no student getting ill, I will know that I and my school have done the best that the current situation demanded. Why add this worry to the burden of everyone's (educators, parents, and students) life?
Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Testimony

Keoni Andrews <keoniandrews@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:49 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

Hello,

I am a single parent of 6 children, 5 of whom are in public school this year at 3 different schools from elementary and middle school up to high school.

I **OPPOSE** the 3 feet rule in spacing of desks for our keiki in schools.

It is dangerous and goes against the scientific reasoning our state has followed in regards to the covid-19 pandemic.

Thank you,

Keoni Andrews
Pearl City school district

Gmail

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

Testimony

Tanya Masunaga Leong <tan.masunaga@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:49 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern;

I am writing this testimony in regards to the Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 School Year.
My name is Tanya Leong. I am a teacher at Mililani Waena Elementary School. I have a son who goes to a different elementary school than where I teach. They're school is following the 6 feet distance as set by the CDC. Our school on the other hand, is not. We are following your recommendation of 3 feet. I cannot tell you how uncomfortable I am with this. I teach little ones and 3 feet is not enough to protect them from catching a cold, let alone COVID-19. I taught summer hub a little while ago, 6 feet seemed a safer distance to me. They all had their own "protective bubble" that no one else could enter. With the the 3 feet, I feel like their bubbles overlap and now they are at higher risk and could potentially get sick. I don't want that for them and their families. Many grandparents at our school are the child's caregivers or are the ones always picking them up. I want to also keep our kupuna safe. I also have asthma and like many others, are scared of coming back with 3 feet. I feel there is a higher chance of catching it and I don't want to bring it home to my son and husband. Please reconsider mandating 3 feet distance. For the sake of our students, families, and our teachers and staff.

Thank you for your time.
Tanya Leong

Gmail

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

Mind made up

RYNE Terao <hwnspeed@msn.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:49 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

“The employer has a duty to the employee for a safe work environment.” Looks like leadership/state willing to ignore the law. This will be my last year of teaching.

Ryne

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Kadie Lyn Kurokawa <kdhoops808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE
I will be entering the 5th grade at Mililani Waena. I am excited to be a 5th grader. But I am also very worried and scared. I saw the news and have heard from my parents and other family members that our schools are looking at 3 feet social distancing.

I don't understand this. At stores there are stickers on the ground that are at least 6 feet apart. If adults have to stand 6 feet apart why are us kids only 3 feet apart?

Will masks be worn by everyone? The mayor said on the news that we all must wear masks indoors and out. But at school it's not mandatory? That doesn't sound safe to me.

My birthday party had to be cancelled in march and I never left my house for 69 days during the lockdown. I felt safe. My mom and dad helped keep me safe. I am currently attending Iolani summer school online and I am enjoying it. And I want to see my friends again but only if we are going to safe and healthy.

Please help keep me and my family safe. I don't feel safe going back to school if we are not following correct distancing and masks. I am only 10 and I DON'T WANT TO GET SICK! And I don't want to get my grandparents sick either.

Thank you
Kadie kurokawa

Gmail

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

Testimony of Unbelievable disregard for safety

Joe M <jmarti0209@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:50 AM

My name is Joseph Martinez. I work at Waianae 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. As a teacher for almost ten years I can not believe the blatant disregard for student, teacher, and community safety. You as a BOE do NOT know better than the CDC. 6 feet is a suggestion to SAVE LIVES not for you to interpret how you see fit for schools. You are endangering countless numbers of people and any lives that could be lost because of this will be on the BOE's hands. If anybody in the BOE thinks 3 feet is a reasonable rule, then they clearly are so out of touch with how classrooms function. It is ignorant and shows how much the BOE truly does not care about anybody as long as they look good for being able to send kids back to school. Your priorities NEED to be the safety of all students and staff and your actions do not reflect this whatsoever. You should be ashamed to even think this is an acceptable plan.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Erin Nakano <nakanoer@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education 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.

My name is Erin Nakano and I am an elementary technology teacher at Lanai High & Elementary School on the island of Lanai. We are a PreK-12 school and our administration proposed an all face-to-face model for the return of the 2020-2021 school year. I also have a child who attends the school and he will be in grade 7 this coming year.

I am extremely concerned about the push for a three-foot separation in classrooms rather than the recommended six-foot distancing that has been the guidelines for every other venue in the state. As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the lack of adequate separation because honestly, elementary kids carry a lot of germs, and from experience, those germs spread quickly around classrooms.

I teach all of the students in grades K-5 and while some of them are able to stay in their seats for a set period of time, many of them struggle to maintain distance from one another and from myself. Younger students are likely to swivel around in their seats and the recommendations specify desks facing the same way, but do not take into account that a living, breathing human being is not a static entity. With only a three-foot separation, the tendency for students to pass germs on to each other is way more probable than with a six-foot separation.

In order to teach effectively, I need to feel safe in my own classroom, and certainly students need to feel safe. Without the adequate distance between students, how can I, as a teacher, reassure my students that they will be safe in my classroom, when I, myself, do not believe that less than a six-foot separation is adequate for protection? In addition, I do not feel comfortable sending my child into a classroom that does not have adequate six-foot separations between students.

If this guideline is not addressed and the six-foot separation is not enforced, I will not be sending my child to school in the Fall. As a teacher, I will set my classroom up with adherence to the six-feet guidelines by the CDC rather than the three-feet suggestions by the APA. I do not think that it is okay to force teachers and students to feel unsafe in a space that is supposed to foster academic education as well as social and emotional support. By negating teachers concerns regarding the three-foot separation, you are creating a hostile environment before we even get started. Please address this issue as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Erin Nakano
Elementary Technology Teacher
Lanai High & Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Laura Uber <lauraeuber@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:54 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 Laura Barbato and I have been an educator in Waianae (Waianae High School and Kamaile Academy) for nearly a decade, and my husband has also teaching here for over 13 years. My son will attend school here one day and I want to be assured he will be granted simple decencies like these when he does.

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 accepting this testimony as it is in the best interest of our keiki, teachers, and all others working in the school system.

Sincerely,

Laura Barbato

lbarbato@kamaile.org

Gmail

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

What if students deliberately get sick to shutdown schools?

teacher calica <teachercalica@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:58 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I am a high school teacher at Mililani high school, and I have legitimate concerns about reopening schools. I am entering my 11th year of teaching, and one thing I learned about high schoolers is that they can be both "dumb" and smart at the same time. What I mean is, students have been out of school for four months now; although some are anxious to return, I know that many will miss their four month summer "vacation" .

So thinking like a high schooler, what if some of them got the bright idea to deliberately get Covid, and pass it to others, in order to shutdown schools? What made me think about this was hearing about teenagers throwing "covid" parties on the mainland.

Many students, if they've been paying attention to the news/social media, know two things about covid 19: teenagers show less-severe symptoms, and it gets places shut down. It won't take very long for them to put those two together.

Gmail

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

Three feet is unacceptable

Anne Marie <amstuder@alulike.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

Shortly after the Hawaii State Teachers Association reached a contractual agreement on the reopening of schools with the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education (BOE), the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) released health and safety guidance that said spacing student seats three feet apart without masks was acceptable. This directly contradicts the agreement with the state and 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.”
I believe 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.”

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. 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.

The language of the agreement also states “….should wear a mask” making wearing a mask a choice rather than an obligation puts everyone at higher risk of infection if six feet of separation is not maintained. One of the intermediate schools here on Maui plans to reopen with Model A, shoulder to shoulder without enough classroom space to accommodate even 3 feet distance. Please, please help keep our keiki, faculty and safe by ensuring that the agreements reached are kept and going a step further to mandate wearing masks or face shields at schools.

Kindest regards,

Anne Marie Studer

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sandy Chun <sandrachun12@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:55 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 name is Sandra Chun and I currently work for Hahaione Elementary School as a 4th grade teacher. I think it is so important that we are still required to remain a 6 feet distance in the classroom. Yes, I know this will be hard for us to do, but it's important to do to keep everyone safe.

We need to remember that school is so important for students to have, so we need to do everything to keep the schools open. If we are adjusting the distance, we need to think about what effects that could bring. By being closer, we are exposing not just the class, but everyone in the school and families. We have to realize that children in one classroom can have siblings/cousins in another classroom. That means we will already be exposing two classrooms, so imagine how many other people we are going to expose. Please make sure that we are still thinking about the health and safety of everyone.

Thank you,
Sandra Chun

Testimony

j l <jlhilo3@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:55 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 Jacqueline Kubo Luna, I am a teacher at Chiefess Kapiolani Elementary School on the Island of Hawai'i. I have a son who will be a senior at Waiakea High School. My son was recently diagnosed with diabetes. He is a high risk student. As a parent, I want to protect my child and keep him safe. **It is important that the 6 feet distancing is followed.** 3 feet is just not acceptable. My son still chooses to want to go to school face-to-face wearing a mask all day because he has a very difficult time with online learning. I also don't have a computer for him at home, which made it very difficult for us during the closure of school. He would go online with his phone, then use his sister's computer for the work, but she is a nursing student who needs her computer, and I was teaching online with my students throughout the day and night. It was a struggle. When school begins, my daughter and I will both be in school leaving him with no computer to use for the online learning. He is also a senior in high school with so many disappointments including the cancellation of all sports and activities this season. As a parent, I worry about everyone's physical health. I also worry about their mental and emotional health. I believe the students do need to have face-to-face opportunities in a safe environment. I would have never thought my son would fall into depression, but he did even with strong family support. My son has chosen to get help for his depression during this COVID pandemic. What about the other students' social emotional well-being? Where will they get the support? I hear him trying to help and support his friends. It's really sad. I believe the students need in-school learning within a safe environment with 6 feet distancing.

I have been a teacher for 31 years. I have been recently placed in a counselor position for one year. I am considered high risk due to my existing health condition and age. As a teacher, it is so important to adhere to the 6 feet distancing in the classroom. As a counselor, I will be working with children individually and in the classrooms. I am sure I will be working closer than 6 feet to help the children in a counselor's role. That scares me and I will need to take every precaution possible. Teachers would prefer having students in school, but we can't be in school when it isn't safe. I suggest adding plexi glass dividers for each student sitting a safe distance apart. The dividers should be high enough above their heads as they sit with three sides as a partition. I can't see students even sitting 6 feet apart with NO masks and no partition! Masks must be on all day. I don't agree with the thought that "classroom clusters" (being in one classroom with one teacher all day) will minimize exposure. It won't make a difference because the students will be among each other, use the bathroom, touch surfaces, etc. Will the custodians will be disinfecting after every use? Not possible. Masks must be worn at all times. No masks in the classroom is a possibility if there are plexi glass partitions. If no plexiglass, kids will have to learn to use the masks all day.

Please understand the importance of the 6 feet distancing.

Suggestion that takes just 24 - 48 hours.TEST it with petri dishes and germ growth!
Studies already show wearing masks works.

Test it 3 feet and 6 feet: sneezing, coughing, talking, singing.

Sitting with no mask.
Sitting with masks.
Sitting with no mask with partitions.
Siting with masks with partitions.

We are educators. Let's be an example, practice what we teach. STEM, Scientific Inquiry. Data will lead the next steps.

Thank you,
Jacqueline Kubo Luna
Teacher/counselor

Gmail

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

Testimony

Amy Var <theteachercouple2@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
This testimony is on behalf of 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 twenty year veteran of the Hawaii State Department of Education. I am also a graduate of the Hawaii public school system and have dedicated my life's work to teaching middle school students on the Big Island of Hawaii. Waiakea Intermediate School is my second home.

I am writing to you in hope that you will reconsider the 3 feet social distancing rule as well as masks being optional in classrooms. Please understand that student and teacher well being are the first priority. I do not understand this mixed message. When I go to the salon to get my hair cut, there is only one client allowed at a time. All must wear masks. All chairs and surfaces must be wiped down before another client may sit. To simply enter a store, masks are required and lines delineate 6 feet of social distance. Why are we teaching our most impressionable students that these rules, which must be adhered to in the day to day environment, are expendable at the school level? This not only sends a mixed message, it undermines any safety measures we are trying to put in place. Our administration is working hard to ensure our safety, but we need your help.

I am a caretaker for my father who has an autoimmune disease and I am scared to go back given these circumstances. I was told yesterday that due to limited space in classrooms, I will have 15 students as according to your policy, they would only need to be 3 feet apart with no mask in the small confines of the room. I do not feel safe in this environment. As a teacher I would do anything for the safety of my kids. I beg you to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet distance between students and make masks required. Now is not the time to see what will happen if we don't put strict measures in place from the onset. We must parallel what is happening in society at the school level as well. Our kids and our lives are depending on you. Please help us stay safe.

Thank you,
Amy Var

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Andrea Yuen <olinaygirl@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:55 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing in regards to Item VI (A) "Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Toby Yuen. I live on the island of Molokai. I am writing in OPPOSITION of the recent statement by the Superintendent of how Hawaii's public schools shall open in August.

I have 2 children. One attends Molokai Middle School and the other Kaunakakai Elementary School. My children have remained at home and away from others since March, 2020. I am testifying because I know that there is no way that my children will be safe if they are in a classroom (with AC) with children and adults who have been around others and not distancing. There is no way that 3ft is a safe distance in a classroom. Why are you not following the CDC guideline that states that 6ft is recommended? SIX FEET MUST BE FOLLOWED and REQUIRED.

Secondly, MASKS MUST BE WORN by all people (students, staff, and parents) on campus at all times. The statement that students and teachers will be fine in their "bubble Ohana" group with no mask is ridiculous. Once my children and wife go back to school, there will be a minimum of 4 bubble groups just for my own family. Can you imagine the "bubble/Ohana" groups that will mix once school begins?

Thirdly, my wife is a veteran teacher within the DOE. Basically as she has given the DOE 21 years of teaching, you respect her by putting her health in jeopardy. As of August 6, 2020, you will be requiring her to teach children who have NOT socially distanced during summer break (Nor will socially distance once school resumes). You say that Distant Learning did not work for students. My wife was on phone calls, at virtual meetings, planning lessons and projects, and providing packets the entire Distant Learning time and her students were responding. We are not Oahu. Many of the families on Molokai do not have two working parents or there are multiple generations in one home. As a result there is someone home that can assist the students. We keep saying that Hawaii children are not capable of distant learning, if we keep saying they can't... then obviously they won't!

As you put my children and wife into a dangerous situation, I ask you these two questions; Are you forcing the opening of schools for the students...or are you opening schools because of the *economy*? Are you thinking of my wife as an educator...or a babysitter?

Again, I am in OPPOSITION of Item VI(A)
Toby Yuen Jr.

Gmail

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

Mask rules & 3ft or 6ft distancing

Melissa Lehua Novikoff <melissa@halaukumana.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:55 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai e kākou,

I'm concerned at the discussion of opening our schools on August 4th when highly recognized institutions such as Harvard and many other universities with adults that have the capacity to practice good hygiene are not opening in the Fall. I'm alarmed that our state would consider putting our babies back into a setting where they are still learning good hygiene. I work at a small public charter school. We had a flu virus go around sometime last year and our entire school was infected in a matter of two days. An outbreak such as COVID-19 in our school would cripple our learning environment. It is scientifically known that 3ft distancing doesn't work. Why would we request this other than taking short cuts? That could be potentially detrimental on many levels. California recently had to shut down again after opening up again. Florida has an alarming number of cases. Texas had 300 toddlers get infected in a matter of days after opening day care. Yes, children are supposedly not as affected by COVID-19 but research in New York city has identified a mutation to the disease that is infecting kids. We live in a state that has the highest population of generational families living in one household. It is known that this virus can pass back and forth between family members. My biggest concern is that kids carry germs and will bring them back to their home in a heartbeat. COVID-19 in a small school like Hālau Kū Māna would infect our entire student population in a matter of possibly minutes that would then spread this virus to their homes and possible cycle back and forth in our school. We also have a large population of low income students. Our cases are on the rise again in the state more than when we were on lock down. If we open schools back again masks although I prefer not to wear them unfortunately are necessary. Thank you for your time. I hope this is resolved soon.

Mahalo nui loa,

Melissa Novikoff

Gmail

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

Our Kainalu Staff came to a consensus on model C. To keep social distancing…

kahaholani@aol.com <kahaholani@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:56 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Our Kainalu Staff came to a consensus on model C. To keep social distancing at 6 ft. If student numbers are greater than 24 in K- 2, specialty teacher will go to K. (Priority grade in K-2)

Grades 3-6 will be 6 ft apart.

All adults will wear a mask or shield. Students will wear mask when in classroom and also outside if social distancing is not feasible. Classrooms will not have AC on.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

3 feet distance

Reiko Miyasato <honu_wahine@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
The three feet social distancing for students is unacceptable. The health community has made it clear that there should be a 6 foot spacing between students. We cannot sacrifice students' and teachers' health!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sierra Jones <hybriid06@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:57 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.

My mom is a teacher for Pahoa High. The stipulations placed around reopening the schools are highly unrealistic. With the FORTY ONE new cases of Covid19 reported JUST TODAY, how can you expect children to comply all day? YOUR PUTTING MY MOTHERS LIFE IN DANGER. YOUR PUTTING THE KEIKI AND OUR COMMUNITY IN DANGER. If adults cannot comply with the safety guidelines, (which is obvious considering the recent uptick in covid cases) its ludicrous to assume the keiki will. PLEASE DONT SEND MY MOTHER INTO A CLUSTER WAITING TO HAPPEN.

Gmail

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

Regarding GBM 7-9/2020, Item VI. Discussion Items A. Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Linda Alicea <linda.alicea2726@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:59 AM

VI. Discussion Items

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

Thank you Madam Chairperson and Members of the Board for this opportunity to voice my concerns.

In the Health and Safety Handbook of the Department's plan to reopen, the DOE acknowledges that regarding Social and Physical Distancing "Keeping six feet apart in the school setting is not always feasible." As a parent of three children, this is very concerning. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made the recommendation of at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people (with the intent of limiting the close face to face contact) to reduce the spread of COVD-19. The health and safety of my children, our colleagues children, our grandchildren, our friend's children, are of the utmost importance and while this decision the DOE has made was not an easy one, I believe this Department will now put our keiki, our future generations at risk by implementing this. These are our children, who are innocent, curious, and depend on us adults to ensure a safe environment for them, that's our responsibility.

The Department also is not requiring students to wear facial masks while in an indoor setting, only requiring students to wear facial masks outdoors. Doesn't this defeat the purpose of protecting them? It has been proven that wearing facial mask coverings helps stop the spread of this virus. Anytime my children are out of our home, they wear their masks; a precautionary and preventive measure I take as a parent.

I humbly implore you Madam Chairperson and Members of the Board, please do not agree to this. These children's lives are in your hands. For the sake of their future, their health, and well being, please do not accept anything less.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Aloha,
Linda Alicea

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jamie Hoopes <hoopesjamie@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:00 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. Please reconsider the enforcement of 6 feet between students inside classrooms. My husband is immunocompromised and I need to be as safe as possible so I don't bring the virus home to him. If masks and 6 feet of social distancing is required for all other public places, than public schools should not be the exception. It is not ok to put school staff and their families at a higher risk.

Keep us safe,

Jamie Hoopes

Jamie Hoopes
Kindergarten
HAAS PCS

Gmail

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

Testimony

jiao_chen92@yahoo.com <jiao_chen92@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Jiao Chen and I am a math teacher at Ilima 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 strong disagree with allowing 3-foot distancing in classrooms, it is dangerous for the students and the teachers. We must require 6-foot distancing in all classrooms. It is more safer for everyone in the classroom.

Second, Hawaii State of Education must require all students to wear masks in the classroom and out of the public to protect their classmates and their teachers. According to Hawaii News Now on July 7th, "Hawaii sees 41 new COVID-19 cases in highest single-day spike since pandemic began". I don't feel safe when students are not wearing a face mask around me. I don't want to see my family or myself have to put a ventilator because an asymptomatic student who didn't put the face mask and they are too close to me in the classroom.

Finally, schools are starting soon but I haven't see any plans for "If a student or a teacher is test positive for COVID-19. What state or schools will do to stop the spread? Are we going to close the school again?"

I personally don't feel comfortable to go back to the school yet if the numbers in Hawaii is continuing growing.

Sincerely,
Jiao Chen

Gmail

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

Testimony in opposition the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year

Kory Kurokawa <korykurokawa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in extreme opposition to the DOE's plan for reopening schools in the 2020-2021 school year as released by the Hawaii Department of Education with the date of July 9, 2020.

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 a public school student, and a spouse, brother and family member of many other teachers and public school employees I am completely in opposition to the plan and it's guidelines for the reopening of the school system. At a minimum there should be adherence to the CDC guidelines in respect to the opening of schools throughout the country. And, if necessary modifications should be made, a source of the change and valid qualifying and quantifying evidence should be available to support rationale for the changes and show that the safety of all involved will not be affected or the safety of those on and around campuses will not be harmed or jeopardized in any way.

I think if you choose to follow through with this plan as written you leave the State, the BOE and DOE open to various criminal and civil lawsuits. Something we cannot afford in the current financial climate.

I urge you to openly reject the current DOE plan as written and consider constructing a new plan using the current CDC guidelines as the basis for the framework of a new working plan.

Respectfully,

Kory Kurokawa
Registered Voter
Senate District 22
House District 36

Gmail

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

COVID RESP0NSE

Stepphanie Hamblin <stepphanie.hamblin@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Stepphanie Hamblin. I am writing in response to the 3ft distancing mandate. I am 57 years old and in pretty good health. My primary care doctor said it would not be good if I got COVID because my nasal passages and ears have been drying out since December 2019. Also, I think placing the students 3ft apart and facing straight ahead is unrealistic. Could you sit that way for any length of time? I think not. I know I couldn't do it. For the health and safety of all look at what you are asking us to do. It is risky at 6ft apart let alone 3ft apart. Where does it say 3ft apart facing forward is safe? I love my students dearly but do not want to put myself or them at risk. Please reconsider the 3ft mandate.
Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

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

Testimony

Mark Kurisu <mkurisu@mules.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher and a coach for over 20 plus years, this one is definitely going to be the most trying yet rewarding. Inspiring and teaching with my students has always been a priority, this year keeping them safe will also be added to my list or priorities.

From the research provided, we need to ensure that all students and faculty are safe during this time. Sanitizing equipment, masks, and proper (6 ft) social distancing must be the new norm. No exceptions.

If these new norms are not adhered to, the ultimate goal of returning everyone back to school for a brick and mortar education will no longer be a possibility. Infections will rise and schools will have to shut down again. Just follow the lead with what happened in China.

We know you have a tough job ahead of you, but the ultimate goal in today's world must be health and safety.

Thank you for your time.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cynthia Matsuda <kaskosmom@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:04 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.

CDC and the science data shows that to help stop the spread of COVID-19, wearing masks and 6' social distancing is critical. For the safety of the children and teachers, students need to be seated 6' apart in the classroom, NOT 3'. The City and County of Honolulu's Mayor has also mandated the wearing of a mask indoors. I am hopeful that you will stand in good faith and honor the contractural agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Thank you.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Barbara Wiener <barbarajwiener@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Discussion Item VI(A): **Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools**

I am a teacher at King Kekaulike High School on Maui. I am very worried that we are risking our keiki and staff's health by reopening without 6 foot social distancing and masks required in and out of the classrooms. Please, let's err on the side of being OVERLY CAUTIOUS and not use schools as an experimental lab for a deadly disease.

Everyone can live with a gap in education during covid. Unfortunately, not everyone will live with exposure to covid in our schools.

Please, slow down and be safer. I won't be able to do anything for my students if I'm sick with covid! And the state will be looking at lawsuits if we don't get this right.

Respectfully,

Barbara Wiener
Special Education teacher
Maui

Gmail

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

Testimony

Hilary Arakaki <hilary.arakaki@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kakou,

To whom it may concern, please consider my 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 Counselor at Nānākuli High & Intermediate School and am appalled that despite The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommneded **"space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk**. is being overlooked so to accommodate the many students and little space available at Hawaii'is varying DOE campuses. Always our students should be priority #1 when making decisions regarding education. It seems that money, politics and the like are colluding and clouding the decision making of those persons responsible for helping to ensure the safety, well being, and best education environment for our HI DOE haumana.

*I stand with HSTA as they 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."*

Furthermore I echo 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,'"

Lastly, in this time of COVID -19 and with daily rising numbers I hope that those in positions to effect change, and authority to make decisions that have the potential to effect all of Hawai'is families they will error on the side of caution and choose to Aloha kekahi i kekahi!

~ Ms. Hilary C. Arakaki
7th Grade Counselor c/o 2025
Nānākuli High & Intermediate School
89-980 Nanakuli Avenue
Waianae, HI 96792
(808) 305-7600
ext. 7737

If you have an emergency please contact 911 and/or the crisis line for Oahu at 808-832-3100, Text Line at 741741 and National Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-8255(TALK).

LQBTQ crisis and support Text START to 678678 or call 1-866-488-7386



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

Testimony

Tiffany Hirota <tiffany.hirota33@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Tiffany Hirota 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. My worksite is located at Kuhio Elementary School, but I have to travel to a lot of different schools across Oahu and interact with students and teachers as well. Not requiring the use of masks by students and teachers while indoors is irresponsible and not safe. The CDC guidelines state that everyone should be wearing a mask indoors. There was already an outbreak in Oregon at a child care facility on July 1, 2020 (https://www.wweek.com/news/state/2020/06/30/oregon-child-care-facility-reports-covid-19-outbreak-among-first-in-nation/). Students need to be in school in order for them to learn effectively, but not protecting them and their teachers is negligent. I also have three children, two of which attend Kaneohe Elementary School and I am worried for their safety and the safety of their classmates. What you are not considering is the unknown. We don't know what occupations families have or what they are doing in their free time. My husband is a firefighter and is on the frontline and while he does do everything in his power to be safe, we do not know what he is bringing home. What if he is an asymptomatic carrier and passes it to us and we go into our classrooms and masks are not required? What then? Already in April one of my sons and myself had to get tested for COVID and while the results came back negative, it was a terrifying moment. Please I urge the board to reconsider requiring the use of masks for the safety of everyone. Mahalo for your time.
Tiffany Hirota

Gmail

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

Testimony

Renee Kaneshiro <jasaiko@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I would like to address the 3 feet implementation distancing rule where students are facing forward and optional face covering requirements. I am a second grade teacher and will be having 20 students in my class. It will be literally impossible to implement the "6 feet rule whenever possible" so my principal will be using the 3 feet rule having the students desks facing towards the front of the class. Students will not be able to only face forward toward the whole day.

As news breaks, there's an update that the Covid-19 is airborne and even the 6 feet rule is not enough. **243 Scientist says the virus can stay in the air, as water droplets up to 6 feet spread and aerosols can travel more than 30 feet. They recommend wearing mask and social distancing indoors.** Reports have claimed, these aerosols emitted by talking or singing can remain in the air for hours.

There has been a spike in outbreak cases daily throughout the nation due to lack of social distancing and wearing of face covering. For example, the Washington State Choir where there was a superspreader 52 people were infected. People were not practicing social distancing or had facial covering. Facial covering does help and good air filtration will help the transmission.

Please insist on the 6 feet or more rule and students must have facial covering especially enclosed areas at school. Protect our teachers and students, my daughter who is a nurse in Seattle, WA. is very concerned about the DOE's ruling. Also, on a personal note, I currently have a heart condition and fall in the vulnerable population, there are many others who will compromise their own health under these guidelines.

Sincerely, Renee Kaneshiro

--
LIve, Laugh, Love, Renee

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kiliona Palauni <kilionapalauni@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:06 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Kiliona Palauni I am a teacher at Kamaile Academy on the Leeward coast of Oahu. I am emailing you to ask that you please rethink your three foot policy in our classrooms.
Many of my students live in homes that are not big enough for their families and many live with their elders and even babies “the most vulnerable to covid 19” in one house. Asking us to sit three feet apart is a terrifying idea! I teach over 70 kids it total that means if one has covid it can easily spread in my classroom and for the leeward coast that live in homes with many people this could be Catastrophic as the virus will spread quickly more so than other parts of the island. I understand the need to have our Keiki in school again but please reconsider the many problems of only distancing our Keiki by three feet. They need to be at least 6 feet apart.
Lastly as a parent I fear that being exposed to so many people every day at such a close proximity I may bring the virus home to my toddler and wife and that is something I don’t want to even imagine.

Please reconsider this policy as a teacher I am asking on behalf of all my students, their ohana And the community in which I serve.

Me ke aloha,
Kiliona Palauni

Gmail

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

6 feet is mandatory

Lissaaubr Varde <lissaaub@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:07 PM
To: testimony.Boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the members of the Board of Education,

The regulations that is mandated for 6 feet social distancing should be mandated for public schools! Three feet will not keep my daughter safe! You will be sentencing our children to a higher risk of covid-19 and inturn raise the infection and death rate in our State. What you are doing is against the CDC. Our keiki's lives matter.

Sincerely,

Lissa-Aubree Varde-Leu

Gmail

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

Testimony; Back To School

fergus flanagan <fergusandlori@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:08 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. This will be my 21st year teaching at Hana High and Elementary School and upon hearing that students will only be 3 feet apart and not six shows me that the BOE is not adhering to the advice of our nation's health advisors.

Upon returning, I expect 6 feet apart and required masks (unless it is unhealthy for the person to wear a mask). Please consider.

Sincerely,
Lori Rowland

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Melyssa Balderas Sosa. I am the sister of a public school teacher. I am writing to you to ask that you follow the 6' guidelines as well as require all people on the school campus to wear masks as stated in the MOU. "Six feet of social distancing" and the wearing of masks have been used commonly as a guide for people in Hawaii and our nation. Why is it that six feet is acceptable everywhere else but yet it is okay to work three feet in a school setting? This is not keeping our keiki or school staff safe. It also puts our communities at risk as we all know the schools are at the heart of our communities. The people who work at our schools will be at risk of becoming ill and or taking this dreadful illness back home to their loved ones. How is it safe when you yourselves, as the Board of Education, still meet virtually because of COVID 19? Please keep that in mind as you make your decisions and recommendations. Please act in good faith and follow what was agreed upon in the MOU between HSTA and HIDOE.

Mahalo,

Melyssa Balderas Sosa

Testimony

Heidi Endow <heidi.endow2017@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

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 Heidi Endow and I am speaking as a teacher, person with a compromised immune system, a daughter/aunty and person caring for my Kupunas. I teach at Mililani Uka Elementary School.

Teacher Perspective

As a teacher, I do not feel safe nor feel comfortable with 3 feet distancing within the classroom. I've taught Kindergarten, 1st grade and 1st grade Inclusion. It will be impossible to have the students "Social Distance" themselves because they are still learning about spatial awareness. This past year I taught 1st grade Inclusion. Everything we did could not be within Social Distancing matters. They turn and talk to each other at their desk, they touch each other without realizing they are touching them, they unexpectedly come up to me by tapping me on the arm to ask for help, they unexpectedly hug each other and me, and they pick their nose unconsciously and touch their supplies and desk after. Students put their name tag in their mouth and constantly touch their face without knowing it. They rub their nose/dig their nose when it's itchy and touch someone after. Another concern I have is when we line up, there are students who turn around to talk to each other or tap them to remind each other to be quiet, but by the time a droplet of spray goes into someone's mouth or nose, it'll be too late. Every task will be difficult to manage such as checking their planner and signing it, checking their homework, working with small groups, correcting their letter formation, having students lead calendar time, walking in line within 3 feet because they bump into each other on accident, signing in by grabbing their name tag, sitting on the carpet, and the list goes on. They touch everything. When they come up to ask a question, we are still teaching them personal space, they do not understand that. When students wash their hands, how do they grab a paper towel? I don't have a dispenser so will they be touching all the paper towels. How am I supposed to tell them to stop before they get within 3 feet? Their attention span is very short, therefore they need "movement" breaks such as transitioning to sit on the carpet, back to their desk, turning and talking to a partner, moving around the classroom. They will not be able to move at all, plus they will get antsy/restless from sitting in the chair the entire day and not be able to focus. Elementary students do not understand how to Social Distance themselves. Even if they Social Distance themselves in the classroom, can we trust that 5-10 year old's know how to Social Distance at recess? Will the yard duty teacher have to tell everyone to Social Distance? They've been away from their friends for so long, they are bound to hug each other. We can't catch every movement at recess so they are bound to share snacks even if we tell them not to. Walking back from recess, they can't Social Distance. Do I blow my whistle and tell everyone to wear their mask back to class and comfort grades Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade when they cry because they heard a loud whistle? Middle school and high school

students are older so they understand how to space out. I can see myself reminding my students to not stand so close to each other EVERY SECOND of the day. They can't even walk in a straight line during the first month of school. If adults can't Social Distance at Times supermarket and Wal-Mart, how can we expect kids Social Distance?

Large Gathering Concern

I do not feel safe with the 3 feet Social Distancing within the classroom. Our Principal said we could fit 26-30 students comfortably in a classroom within 3 feet, but my class is a portable, which is smaller than a classroom. I have 3 teacher desks because it was an Inclusion classroom which leaves me with less space. We also need to do temperature checks as a student comes into the classroom, but what if they are ASymptomatic and don't show symptoms? How am I supposed to identify a student with Covid-19 who is showing no symptoms? There have been students who came to school this past year who looked fatigued, therefore we sent them to the health room. Prior to sending them to the health room they would tell me they had a fever the night before but their parents gave them Tylenol, but they still came to school. By that time, it's too late! They've infected everyone on their table. Any virus or sickness travels FAST in a 1st grade classroom/Elementary school classroom because it's an ENCLOSED room. When one of our student's went home with the flu, his only symptom was a stomach ache. Within the next few weeks, half our class got the flu. Shortly after, I got the flu. What's going to happen if I'm out sick with Covid-19? Will anyone want to sub for me because the majority of substitutes are retired teachers who have a compromised immune system. Will I need to plan ahead every week just IN CASE I'm out for recovery time? While my body is aching and can barely get out of bed, will I need to write up sub plans so my class doesn't fall behind? Will that responsibility fall on my grade level to take my 26-30 students? Since they were exposed to whoever gave me the virus, they will infect every single classroom. 27-30 children in one classroom is considered a LARGE gathering, but why is the Mayor telling people to not gather with more than 10 people or in large groups, but it's okay for us to gather in a LARGE group of 27-30 children within 3 feet distancing "whenever possible?" It won't be possible. Since the classroom is enclosed, even if we kept all the windows and doors open, is it really safe? Covid-19 is contracted when people are together for a long period of time during face to face contact. We will be with our LARGE group of 27-30 students from 7:55 am till 2:05 pm. That's 6 hours! If I decide to keep my air conditioning off, will parents complain that their child cannot perform to the best of their abilities because they can't think in the heat? What about my safety for wanting to air out the classroom for everyone else's safety. 1st graders and Elementary school students don't even know when they have to sneeze or how to cover their mouth from a cough. They sneeze in the open with all the germs floating through the air. Not all parents will and are teaching their children how to Social Distance and wear a mask, therefore that responsibility will fall on teachers to teach these children how to wear a mask, when to wear it, how to use it appropriately and not play around with it. Will it be my fault if a student gets Covid-19 because they weren't wearing their mask? I can see a student saying "My mom/dad said I don't need to wear my mask or I don't want to wear it?" Why is it okay to squish 26-30 elementary students into a classroom just so they don't fall behind on the curriculum? Also, throughout the year, many military families move to our school, that means we usually gain 3-6 new students within the grade level throughout the year, which leaves less space within the classroom. Health and safety comes first. We need to look at the bigger picture.

Compromised Immune System

I have a compromised immune system because I have Systemic Lupus Erythematosus and I'm only 24 years old. When I get sick, it takes me double the amount of time for my body to recover due to my body having a weak immune system. I'm honestly very scared. I feel like a frontline worker wanting to cover myself in full gear. When I was fighting Lupus and they couldn't figure out what was wrong with me, my family, teachers, and myself didn't think about school at all because I was fighting for my life. Education won't matter if someone is deceased. We are in the same situation, people are fighting for their life with Covid-19. 3 feet within an enclosed classroom is unsafe and not considered "Social Distancing." Elementary students cannot stay away from each other. With 3 feet distancing, it's almost like not wearing a mask because that's so close to each other. Would you rather Social Distance as far as possible or be on a ventilator/see your loved one on a ventilator because they weren't Social Distancing? In a worst-case scenario, what if they had to choose who gets the ventilator and who lives due to an outbreak that will happen in school?

Caring for my Household/Kupuna

In addition, I don't only have myself to think about, but my household family members. I go home to my mom and dad who are in their late 50's. They have a compromised immune system due to their age and will probably have a recovery time double of mines. I also go home to my sister who is also a teacher and my nephew who is only 1 year old! We live in an apartment so there is no way for us to Social Distance and isolate ourselves from the rest of each other. Therefore, if I contract Covid-19 OR become ASymptomatic, what if my nephew gets Covid-19 and isn't so lucky by showing symptoms of a fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, and headache. Since he's only 1 all he can do is cry about every little pain he is feeling because he can't talk and tell us what hurts or what's wrong. All we can do is carry him, comfort him and "ease the symptoms" when he'll be scream crying at 2 am because there is NO CURE. Last summer, I unfortunately got hand foot and mouth disease. My nephew got it a few weeks after me even though he self-isolated by staying at another household with my sister. I felt awful. Seeing the pain he went through and not being able to say what hurt/what was wrong broke my heart. All he could do was cry about the pain I knew the pain he felt. From the sores in his mouth, the sore throat, not being able to swallow and the sore spots on his hands and feet. My mom and sister had to give him milk through a syringe because he didn't want to drink anything due to the sores in his mouth. If he contacts Covid-19 from me because of something that could have been prevented by "Social Distancing of 6 feet" or not even having contact with students (Distance Learning), my heart will shattered into a million pieces. What if my whole family gets Covid-19? I'm putting them at risk by being in a classroom full of 27-30 students 3 feet apart, which isn't even Social Distancing because they are going to come up to me and touch me or it'll be in the air. Everyone reacts to Covid-19 differently based on their immune system, some with mild symptoms and some severe. Would you want to be on a ventilator or see your loved one on a ventilator because they were only 3 feet apart in a classroom? We've only been able to visit my grandma recently because we have been quarantining and Social Distancing from everyone. She lives by herself. We wear our mask when we go over and stay for a short while and bring her food. If I gave her Covid-19 from someone at school, my heart would break. She has a compromised immune system being 83 years old. Since she lives by herself, we need to check up on her by bringing her food and getting her the necessities.

Temperature Checks/Wearing a Mask

I honestly feel like teachers get put on the back burner because we get stuck or the job gets passed onto us with all the challenging tasks and responsibilities that should be their parent's responsibility. People think our job is so easy, but it doesn't end. During my 1st year of teaching I lost 10 pounds due to stress. It puts so much responsibility on us to be checking each student's temperature upon coming into the classroom, per our Principal's request. We will have to end up teaching our students how to wear a mask and not to play around with it, teaching them to practice safe Social Distancing, which they don't understand the importance at such a young age and cannot do! We need to help health care workers by flattening the curve and minimizing outbreaks. 3 feet will cause a spike in increased cases. Our Principal said that our students do not have to wear a mask once they are in the classroom because they will be 3 feet apart, but that's how the virus will spread. We need to have fewer kids in a class or just stick to online learning once they either find a cure for Covid-19 or there are 0 cases for a long time.

My grandpa taught me to work hard and that's what I did by going to college and getting a degree to become a teacher. This will be my 4th year of teaching. I love this profession so much, but I feel like I'm being given an ultimatum to live with 3 feet "Social Distancing" in the classroom teaching and put myself and family at risk or quit.

What if our students have Covid-19 and we don't know? We don't know who our students go home to and who their parents or siblings hang around, whether they are social distance or not. They may have had a big gathering and we wouldn't know. Everyone could be ASymptomatic. What if someone in their household contracts Covid-19 and the student comes to school without self-quarantining or isolating themselves? Who's going to monitor that? It's going to be too late because they'll have infected 27-30 students plus me. When I go home, I'll infect 5 more people. Plus, I have to ride in an elevator upon getting up to my apartment which is 72 units consisting of more that 100 people. 3 feet distancing is a ticking time bomb waiting to happen. As teachers we work endlessly trying to educate our students and get them ready for the world that lies ahead of them. Shouldn't we also be teaching them that health is a priority over anything else? I understand I chose this profession to become an educator and would be working with children, but can you PLEASE put yourself in a teachers shoes and think about you running a classroom of 27-30 students ranging from 5-10 years old within 3 feet distancing, and knowing they can't sit for a long period of time so they will act out, not pay attention, touch each other, dig their nose, and teach them while practicing safe Social Distancing? It's easy to tell someone to do something if you're not in their shoes or the one having to do it. People don't think so seriously of something until it happens, but by that time it'll be too late.

Thank you,
Heidi Endow

Gmail

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

Re-opening Concern

liberty furchgott <libertypoetez@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am both a parent and a teacher and being as such I am concerned on multiple levels about schools re-opening with regard to the safety of both students, families, and faculty as we embark into unknown territory with the Covid-19 pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year.

As a teacher I am aware that the DOE is following DOH guidelines when it comes to re-opening our schools but quite honestly those guidelines do not relieve any of my anxieties regarding safety since they are not in line with the guidelines set by the CDC.

As a teacher I have great concerns about allowing students to sit in such close proximity with one another, three feet apart to be exact, when the CDC has stated that social distancing should be at least six feet apart. Why are we not heeding the advice from the Centers for Disease Control?

In addition to what seems like negligence with the current DOE three feet social distancing guidelines, it seems that the language of the current agreement is also lacking in enforcing the most basic of our protections against spreading and contracting Covid-19; masks.

The agreement that was reached between the DOE and HSTA states that masks "should" be worn but there is no language to mandate this. Why are masks not being required when the CDC and all other health organizations and scientists are continually imploring people to wear masks for their own and for others' safety?

As much as I want this all to be done and for us all to go back to "normal," the pandemic is simply not over!

There are even new findings and concerns raised by scientists that suggest that Covid-19 could be spread through the air which makes not making masks mandatory and having students sit within a few feet of each other for lengthy face to face class periods even that much more negligent with regard to health and safety.

I myself have Asthma and am so concerned about the lack of clear and consistent safety protocols from the DOE that I am considering filing for accommodations to ensure my own safety...but as a parent those same accommodations are not available to my child.

How can we re-open our schools without clearly outlined safety protocols so that students too are ensured a safe learning environment where they do not have to constantly worry about their own health?

As a parent and a teacher I humbly ask that there be more vigilance with regard to safety guidelines and protocols for our children, the teachers and their families as we prepare to re-open our schools.

We need to have it stated and mandated that social distancing will be at minimum six feet apart.

We need to have it stated and mandated that masks will be worn while in school settings.

We need to have the sanitizing and cleaning protocols concisely written down and communicated to the greater communities so that families can weigh the risks of sending their children to school, so that they can know what other precautions they will need to be taking on their own part to ensure the safety of their children.

I ask that these requests do not fall on deaf ears as too much is a at risk to allow schools to re-open with the negligent health and safety guidelines that are currently in place.

Thank you for your time,
Ms. Liberty Furchgott
(Special Education Teacher HHIS)

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lori Hoover <lori.hoover@ewamakai.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:10 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lori Hoover, I am a teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School/Campbell Kapolei Complex
Meeting: Student Achievement
Agenda items: Student wear masks and 3-6 ft rule

Position: I oppose the idea that masks worn by students are not mandatory in the classroom. Only in the case of medically diagnosed ailments that would prohibit the use of a mask should be allowed, by doctors orders. This would be a reasonable accommodation. Otherwise, allowing older students such as in middle and high school who should be able to withstand the discomfort of wearing a mask to decide for themselves whether to wear protection would be irresponsible and risk the health of others as many would likely choose not to wear it because it makes them look funny. It would also put undo stress on teachers and staff to continually try to enforce those who just don't like to follow guidelines. If masks were said to be mandatory by the BOE and HIDOE, other than for those who have medical issues, we would have recourse in doing our duty to keep EVERYONE safe. If discomfort is an issue for students they are welcome to take a break outside to get relief from wearing the mask. Otherwise, as a person in the high risk category of suffering from COVID-19, I am grateful to everyone who bears the discomfort and wears a mask anyway during these times.

Position: I oppose the 3 foot rule if students are facing the same direction. That just doesn't make sense. It should not be assumed that students will not turn their head to face one another. If they do, they will be violating the 6 foot social distance rule.This would be impossible to enforce as well since it is human nature to look at a person while they are talking. It is understandable that on the bus students will be sitting closer than 6 feet and that can't be helped effectively. However, older students on the bus are more likely able to control being socially distant on the bus and, they'll probably be playing on their phones other than talking to each other anyway. This isn't the case in the classroom where we are more likely to be having many classroom discussions. We should NOT increase our chances of spreading COVID-19 in the classroom by assuming that students will remain facing forward and the virus will only project itself up to 6 feet directly in front of someone and not at all to the sides. The whole idea is just preposterous especially since we were told to bring in as much fresh moving air into our rooms as possible! My hope is that the BOE and the HIDOE concur on rules that first and foremost help teachers to do our jobs of teaching students safely, not make things more difficult than they already are.

Thank you,
Lori Hoover

Gmail

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

Testimony: Mask Rules & 3ft/6ft Distancing

Nicole Heinlein <nikkidanielle@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the 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 an English Learner Coordinator and Teacher at 'Iao Intermediate on the island of Maui. My daughter will be a 5th grader at Pomaika'i Elementary and my son will be a 9th grader at Maui High. My husband is applying to be a substitute within the Lahainaluna complex for the 2020-2021 school year. We have been Maui County residents since 2012.

As I read the Memorandum of Understanding reached between the Department of Education and the Hawaii State Teacher Association, I felt relieved that the employer cared about the health and safety of both students and adults they come in contact with, especially with the recommendation of 6 feet of distancing: “schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread … reducing opportunity for the spread of respiratory droplets … by maintaining six (6) feet … of separation between and among students and staff members … whenever possible.” The MOU also states “individuals, including employees, students, and campus visitors should wear face coverings” especially “in circumstances where sufficient physical distancing is difficult or impossible, within 6 feet of others.” The CDC recommends both face coverings and 6 feet distance. The WHO now recommends masks when distancing isn't possible (like much of our school day is), and many state Departments of Health also recommend face coverings and 6 feet distancing.

The DOE now violated the MOU with their Guidance for Reopening Schools that includes 3 feet of distancing when students are seated and face coverings only outside the classroom. I feel that the DOE realizes most schools cannot accommodate many children in our overcrowded classrooms with a 6 feet guideline, but more students can fit with 3 feet. I feel the DOE is putting teachers, our families, and student's families at risk by not addressing the true problem - our schools are outdated and overcrowded. I know many local moms who are vocal about not wanting their children in masks, but their fears are based off of faulty science (CO_2 poisoning, inability to breathe correctly, etc) and I am concerned the DOE is feeding into this with the new guidance.

I now do not feel that the DOE is concerned about my family's health and safety. I did not sign up to be a teacher 20 years ago to be thrown into a classroom without protection from a deadly pandemic. Teachers are going to die. Kids are going to get sick. We do not yet know the lasting effects of this virus. I am not "enjoying my summer". I am panicking and full of anxiety. The decisions the DOE is making is adversely affecting my mental health.

Please hold the DOE accountable to ensuring safety for all students and staff by enforcing a 6 foot distance and face coverings for those who can safely wear.

Sincerely,

Nicole Heinlein

--
Nicole Heinlein

Gmail

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

Opening school year 2020-21

Kathy Tanita Ohama <kathy.tanita_ohama@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Directors,

For the safety of our students and teachers I think that it is imperative to abide with the 6 feet spacing between students.

Wearing masks should be made mandatory at all times since we are still unsure if COVID19 is spread via droplets or aerosols.

I'm a teacher at Pearl City High, 56 years old and diabetic. My son is 16 and a student at Pearl City High School. He has an asthma condition and is allergic to the penicillin family.

So the issue about 3 ft or 6 ft distancing and mask wearing is very important to us because it affects our health directly.

Please. Let's be safe and implement the 6 ft distancing and mask wearing at all times.

Thank you.

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

TESTIMONY

Nate Pontious <nate.pontious@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hey could you do me a solid and make sure I don't have to choose between my job and my health? I'm writing about Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for SY2020–21.

I live in Kapaa and have worked at Kauai High School for nearly 10 years, where my partner also works.

I think it is really foolish to consider three feet a safe social distance. Look, if we tell students to stay 6 feet apart, they'll hover at 4 or 3; tell them 3 feet we might as well call it a group hug. But this is like criticizing Donald Trump's grammar: it's just a small piece, not even the crux of the incorrectness.

Do not open the schools yet. It is too soon. The first wave is just now reaching the islands and there is far more risk in gathering now than in March when we wisely stayed home.

The pandemic is affording us time to rethink many of the given structures in schools, such as start times, and I think it is worth taking an extra month to better plan our best reopening. After all, July and August are the hottest months of the year and no one has air conditioning.

Sincerely,

Nate Pontious
EL Coordinator, Kauai High School

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Kavyka Sosa. I am the nephew of a public school teacher. I am writing to you to ask that you follow the 6' guidelines as well as require all people on the school campus to wear masks as stated in the MOU. "Six feet of social distancing" and the wearing of masks have been used commonly as a guide for people in Hawaii and our nation. Why is it that six feet is acceptable everywhere else but yet it is okay to work three feet in a school setting? This is not keeping our keiki or school staff safe. It also puts our communities at risk as we all know the schools are at the heart of our communities. The people who work at our schools will be at risk of becoming ill and or taking this dreadful illness back home to their loved ones. How is it safe when you yourselves, as the Board of Education, still meet virtually because of COVID 19? Please keep that in mind as you make your decisions and recommendations. Please act in good faith and follow what was agreed upon in the MOU between HSTA and HIDOE.

Mahalo,

Kavyka Sosa

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 Kauʻi Hoʻokano-Tulchin and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Wahiawa Middle School and my child attends a private school.

As a teacher, I am not confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space to keep everyone safe. When one goes out to shop, we are asked to stay 6 feet away to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. Most places have placed stickers or tape to make sure one is following the 6 feet rule. Why is this guideline not supported in the classroom? The students will be in an enclosed space for at least 6 hours a day with only 3 feet of distancing between them. Doesn’t this sound crazy! I don’t understand how the 6 feet distancing rule is not a priority in an enclosed classroom amongst children. Children are still learning about boundaries and are constantly reminded not to do things. Making sure they don’t touch their faces or cover their sneezes or coughs is not a top priority for them. What will happen is possible exposure to others and putting everyone at risk. Returning to another quarter of stay-at-home will not help. We cannot let this happen again. We need to make sure that safety for all is priority #1.

Teachers are the experts in the classroom. They know and see what happens everyday while teaching. The 3 feeet distancing rule and no mask creates a high risk for the spread of COVID-19 and may put our state at risk. Is that what we want? Please let teachers be a part of the discussion because they know first-hand what will or will not work. They are the “eyes” in the classroom. We ask that you honor the contractual agreement HSTA shared with recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to maintain 6 feet distancing between student desks.

Mahalo,

Kauʻi Hoʻokano-Tulchin

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Esther Macy <esther.macy@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:17 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 names is Esther Macy and I am speaking as both a teacher and a retired front line Health professional (Registered Nurse).

As a full time teacher and retired Registered Nurse, I am NOT comfortable with just 3 feet distancing especially because I am a music choir teacher. Knowing my students and having them 3 ft apart and facing front will NOT work. I have students interact in my classes and these students will turn side to side and turn to their backs to socialize with other students and some may not be compliant with keeping their masks on. They will not sit and just stare to the front of the room during the whole class period. This is NOT realistic.

I strongly admonish the use of 6 ft distancing for the safety of teachers and students. 3 ft is NOT acceptable and as a health professional and full time teacher I know the importance of distance, use of face masks and how this virus spreads with close contact. I feel for the overworked health care workers and full hospitals that care for covid patients. WE NEED to keep the virus from spreading and KEEP our HOSPITALS able to treat these patients. We need safety for our teachers and students at hand. Please listen to our plea for safety. This is a serious concern to everyone's health and well being.

Sincerely,

Esther Macy/Choir Teacher & Retired Registered Nurse

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Testimony

Dee Wong <deardee@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi there,

My name is Dee Wong and I am a special education preschool teacher at Maemae Elementary School. My kid is also attending Maemae Elementary. 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**.

As a parent, I would be very concerned about my child's safety. 3-foot distancing is absolutely NOT acceptable, not to mention that face mask wearing is not mandatory. The recent COVID 19 cluster breakout at Hawaiian Airlines training is one perfect example. Face mask wearing at the training was "optional" and it just took one person to spread the germ to multiple people and then their families. Ideally, I'd want all kids to wear face masks and be 6-feet away in the classrooms. When face-masks wearing is not mandatory, I think kids should be at least 6 feet away from each other.

As a special education preschool teacher, I can testify most of my preschool students and some older SPED students are not able to understand the meaning of social distancing whether it is 3 feet or 6 feet. I am teaching this summer's ESY. We tried to teach our SPED kids social distancing, but it is just hard. What does not help was many of kids who are on Autism Spectrum Disorder just cannot tolerate face masks. I hope that BOE and DOE would have something else in place for some special education children to help keep them safe. For example, if these children are not able to keep social distance and wear face masks, perhaps reducing class size smaller can be something to consider?

Thank you for your time.
Have a great day!
Dee

Gmail

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

Testimony

Christina <konomi@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:21 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I, Christina Kupihea, am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 School Year. I urge the Board to please mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between each student's desk in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19. My children will be attending **Mililani Waena Elementary School** and I am not okay with putting my children at the highest risk for contracting COVID-19 because classrooms are not mandated to be configured with six feet between each desk as recommended by the CDC. If your efforts are to ensure a safe environment for all staff and students and to minimize the spread of infectious diseases, then please reconsider classroom configurations and mandate that spacing between each student be at least 6 ft apart.

Mahalo,
Christina Kupihea

Gmail

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

Testimony to BOE

Rayna Balderas <raynabldrs@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Alyssa Silva <alyssa801@gmail.com>, "melyssa@maukamedicalbilling.com <>" <melyssa@maukamedicalbilling.com>

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Rayna Balderas. I am the niece of a public school teacher. I am writing to you to ask that you follow the 6' guidelines as well as require all people on the school campus to wear masks as stated in the MOU. "Six feet of social distancing" and the wearing of masks have been used commonly as a guide for people in Hawaii and our nation. Why is it that six feet is acceptable everywhere else but yet it is okay to work three feet in a school setting? This is not keeping our keiki or school staff safe. It also puts our communities at risk as we all know the schools are at the heart of our communities. The people who work at our schools will be at risk of becoming ill and or taking this dreadful illness back home to their loved ones. How is it safe when you yourselves, as the Board of Education, still meet virtually because of COVID 19? Please keep that in mind as you make your decisions and recommendations. Please act in good faith and follow what was agreed upon in the MOU between HSTA and HIDOE.

Mahalo,

Rayna Balderas

Gmail

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

Testimony

Rebecca Brito <rebecca.brito@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:21 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 reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.
I do not feel the safe being in a classroom with the 3 feet distancing and not requiring masks. The guidelines set forth by the CDC are being ignored and putting our safety at risk.
At this time, I feel the only safe situation for us as teachers, families, and students, we NEED to continue with virtual learning until this pandemic settles down. As the state starts allowing visitors in, the virus WILL continue to spread.
Please take the time to read my testimony and take into the account that we, as teachers, love our job and students, but should not have to put all of our safety at risk.

Mahalo,
ReBecca Brito
7th Grade Health Teacher
Kealakehe Intermediate School
74-5062 Onipaa St.
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

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Testimony

Megan Escalona <megan.escalona@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:23 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 Megan Escalona. I am a teacher at Waiākeawaena Elementary in the Hilo-Waiākea complex on the island of Hawai‘i. I am very concerned about going back to school where the CDC’s recommendation of six feet and using masks is not mandatory.

I demand that the Board of Education mandate classrooms to be configured with six feet between student desks. I demand that children need to wear their masks in the classroom. The same policies that are in place for the general public must also be enforced in our public schools. When these recommendations by the CDC are not enforced in our schools, it is saying that we don't matter. We do matter.

At the end of the day, we as teachers go home to our own families. We should not have to jeopardize our own health, safety, and well-being by being in classrooms that are not following CDC requirements. We also cannot jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of our students (and their families), and the rest of our staff (and their families as well). There has been a spike in cases across Hawai‘i. We must do everything we can to make sure schools are safe for everyone. Please mandate six feet between student desks and that masks are worn in the classroom too.

Thank you.

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

Testimony

Lisa Ebinger <lisaebinger@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lisa and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Mililani Ike Elementary School. My daughter also attends my school. I have been a teacher for over 15 years now.

These past few months I've been living very cautiously. The way we function today is so different from pre-pandemic days. I'm experiencing a lot of anxiety with reopening the community and now with plans for reopening our school.

My school has chosen to do face-to-face daily. I get it. It's easier to teach students all at once and in the classroom setting. I really miss doing this, but it makes me so nervous to go back to pre-pandemic teaching when we're still in the middle of a pandemic (and covid counts are rising up again - today's all time high - 41 new cases!!).

Knowing that my daughter will be in the same boat as me, I NEED to be sure that we're both in the safest environment. Per DOE and HSTA agreement, social distancing of 6 feet MUST be in effect. All of this time, CDC, Governor Ige, Lt. Governor Green, and DOH have emphasized repeatedly that our community needs to continue to be vigilant in staying socially distant and WEAR MASKS AT ALL TIMES!

Why should hundreds of students and teachers be an exception to this direction?

Please be considerate of ALL of us.

Thank you,
Lisa

Gmail

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

Testimony

Catherine Hurd <catherinehurd818@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing to give testimony on Discussion Item VI(A) and the reopening of schools. My name is Catherine Hurd and I teach at Kapaa Middle School on Kauai. I taught summer school and was able to experience the difficulty of teaching while wearing a mask and enforcing regulations during this time of pandemic. It is very important that we maintain a distance of six feet as much as possible during the school day in order to keep the number of people on campus as low as possible. The risk of transmitting the virus increases as people gather together and our school sites can easily become a hotbed of infections. There are many opportunities to spread the virus daily on a school campus and we can only truly mitigate that risk by being extremely cautious with the number of people on a school campus.

Please consider the impact on our communities as we continue to adjust to living with Covid-19 and educating our students.

Thank you,
Catherine Hurd

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shanae Hatchell <shanae.hatchell@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:26 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.” My name is Shanae Hatchell and I am testifying as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Kahuku High and Intermediate School and my child attends Ahuimanu Elementary.

As a teacher, the 3 ft distancing makes no sense to me, especially when CDC guidelines recommend a minimum distance of 6 ft in order to minimize the spread of Covid 19. How can I keep my students safe with these guidelines in place? In my classroom, I do not have individual student desks. I have 16 tables that fit 2 students. With the furniture I have in my classroom, there is no way to keep students 3 feet apart if I have more than 16 students. This also implies that students will stay seated at all times, which students don't. Some students need to move. Others may need to sharpen their pencils or use the restroom. There is no way to keep students a safe distance from one another if class sizes are not drastically reduced.

As a parent, the fact that the leaders of the DOE think that 3 feet social distancing in schools is acceptable is making me reevaluate if I want to send my child back to school at all. Schools are supposed to provide a safe environment for children to learn and these guidelines don't provide the safe part. As society, we are supposed to social distance with at least 6 feet and yet schools have to social distance by 3 feet. If that is the case, why not just have schools return back to normal without any guidelines? Three feet is not a safe enough distance to minimize the spread of this virus.

Thank you,

Shanae Hatchell

Gmail

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

Social Distancing Practicality

Penny Gilman <penny.gilman@mauihigh.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:26 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Penny Gilman and I work with Maui High School's Adult Students with disabilities in a community based instructional setting. Our facility is located in professional office setting. Our tables measure 30"x 60". By placing plexiglass barriers down the center of each table, students will have a 30" x 30" work station. They will be back to back from table to table with approximately 2-3ft between backs. Two rows of tables are needed to accommodate the class of 12 students. Rows can be 3 feet apart. The area will not allow for 6 feet of distance.

Since Special Education Students are deemed as "vulnerable" the plan is for them to attend school full time in person.
By being creative with the schedule, the time that all 12 students (and 4 staff) are in the room together can be minimized but it cannot be avoided entirely.

Students participate in a variety of community activities as part of their transition plan. For example they use public transportation services, work at vocational training sites, shop for groceries, work out at gym clubs and attend recreational activities. Each activity comes with its own set of challenges when considering personal safety and social distancing.

I agree that as an educational institution we need to abide by CDC's 6ft guidelines for personal distancing. However, with all my so called "vulnerable students" attending school full-time it is not practical that those guidelines can be followed.

Therefore, if DOE mandates 6ft distancing, I will not be able to comply. And yet that is the CDC's recommendation. Also, I must add that it will be extremely difficult for my special needs students to maintain wearing face masks consistently for any length of time.

I want people on all sides to understand that returning to school is a huge challenge. I certainly don't have all the answers. And I have to say distance learning was and is not the answer for a instruction which is focused on functional skills. Therefore, I think that part time attendance needs to be on the table for special need students just as it is for general education students. Only with fewer people in the room can 6ft distancing be achieved.

In closing I want to share that I am a very qualified teacher with over 30 years of experience. I also happen to be in a vulnerable position as a senior citizen with a history of lung and heart issues as are other members of my team. Accordingly, we need to be distancing at the recommended 6ft as much as humanly possible.

Sincerely,
Penny Gilman
Maui High SPED

--
Penny Gilman

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Guidelines to reopening schools in SY 2020-21

Jason Tanaka <jason.tanaka@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board Members,

My name is Jason Tanaka, a secondary mathematics teacher at Leilehua High in the Central District. I write to you with concern and my take on the unforeseeable future with reopening the upcoming school year.

I am and have been in compliance with all state and health regulations that have taken effect since March. Having returned from California recently, I am on day 6 of 14 of my self quarantine. Having seen in person what is happening in California, and was present to the Riverside and LA districts reclosing bars and dine-in restaurants due to their increase in COVID-19 cases, and I fear we are heading in the same direction as California with our current guidelines to reopening schools.

3ft apart and not requiring masks inside classrooms while seated is really an accident and possible lawsuit waiting to happen. Masks should be on at all times while on a campus (unless eating) with approx. 800 students and 200 staff members (projected Leilehua half student and full staff numbers). Keeping anyone in groups of 10 or less 3ft apart, even if they are facing forward, is unacceptable. Would you allow your child to sit next to a possible carrier of COVID-19 3ft away from them? Also, secondary aside, how many primary students really face forward during class?

The biggest motivation for me writing this, is out of concern for my fellow staff members. I do not live in fear of COVID-19 and feel confident I could survive if I were to ever get sick, but what about those that have fears of getting COVID-19 because they are high risk themselves or to family members? Some go home to eldery family that need to be cared for, besides possibly giving COVID-19 to their own family. Lawsuit? What about the at risk teachers who teach in a portable and have to use the A/C because the weather won't allow for just the windows and doors to be left open? What if a school can not provide the needed resources to keep the campus and classrooms disinfected? Something needs to be done quickly before someone possibly loses their life and our school system shifts from on campus to full distance learning again.

Could we possibly limit all school registrations to lock in student number populations for each school in order to prepare correctly and effectively in keeping everyone safe? Students may leave, but receiving a student will have conditions and a possible denial. The locked number for each school would be slightly higher than the actual physical number to account for military transfers, new residents, and homeless students. Geographic Exceptions should also cease during this period, unless the school has space to accommodate the student due to the student's own school in their district being full . Once the number is reached, the school is closed to any other students due to safety concerns. Just a suggestion and of course would need to be worded correctly before implementing, but is an option to consider besides putting students 3ft apart.

This is my testimony as a union member, coworker and friend.

Mahalo for your time,
~j.tanaka

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Testimony

Kariane Park Toyama <karianep@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:26 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
My name is Kari Park Toyama. 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 worked for the DOE for over 20 years and currently employed at Waiheʻe Elementary School on the island of Maui. My daughter attends ʻIao Intermediate, also on Maui.

For the safety of myself, my colleagues, my child, her classmates, and all the keiki attending public school in Hawaiʻi, I humbly request the Board honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six-feet between student desks.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kari Park Toyama

Norwex Independent Sales Consultant
Makawao, Hawai'i

(808) 280-6808
www.kaript.norwex.biz

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

Testimony

Judy Shapley <jshapley@nawaiolapcs.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:28 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am Judith Shapley. I am a 6th grade teacher at Na Wai Ola Public Charter School located in Mountain View on Big Island. I highly support allowing a 3 ft distance between students in their primary classroom space. I believe students need the maximum amount of face to face instruction we can provide them and that a 3 ft distance will allow more students to receive face to face instruction more often. I also support students being able to take off their mask inside of their primary elementary classroom space/"ohana unit"
Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Judith Shapley

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

Testimony - Item VI(A)

Kim Dempsey <kim.dempsey@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:28 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
>
> Looking at the MOU, my biggest concern is masks and 3 ft distancing.
>
> Masks outside The classroom only is counterintuitive to the role and functionality of masks.
>
> I understand that 6 feet is face to face and 3 feet is acceptable “shoulder to shoulder”. With that, it is not reasonable to assume that students will not be facing each other during conversation.
>
> Models were conceived to minimize risk to students. The standards set with masks and distance discounts this effort.
>
> In addition to my above concerns, I also feel that teacher safety was not at the forefront of the models. Within any given week we will see our entire roster.
>
> Mahalo nui loa,
Kim Dempsey
Kealakehe Intermediate School educator
>
> Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony

Moe Williams <moesspott@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

In regards to discussion item vi on the dept of ed opening 2020 to 2021 school year...
I do not feel safe with the 3ft rule and no masks if all the children face the same direction. I am assuming you inderstand that children will not sit straight ahead for the school day and often talk to classmates?
I am quite worried about children not wearing masks (and I know it's uncomfortable). These children could transfer the disease to children and teachers.
I am quite concerned that because of these rules we all will get sick. Then what happens? Hospitals too full, no money for time off, people die, and etc. There already is not enough teachers.
Thank you for your time.

Maureen "Moe" Williams
Special Education teacher
Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary

Gmail

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

Teacher testimony for mask/6ft distancing requirements

Carbys Zimmerman <carbysz@kanuikapono.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:29 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a High School teacher at Kanuikapono Charter School in Anahola Kauai. I am also a father to one Middle School student and 2 Elementary School students so I have an interest in all of the various levels of schooling the Hawaii provides.

I am writing to ask the board to please make masks mandatory for students and staff and also to insist that the 6ft distancing applies within the classroom.

As the United States and most of the world is currently facing an ever increasing number of Covid-19 cases teachers are being asked to work on the front lines to provide the educational needs of the children of society. We must keep the classroom safe for everyone or we will be faced with an all virtual setting again before we know it.

Please make masks and 6ft distancing mandatory across the state otherwise there will be too many instances of students and teachers not following the CDC stated guidelines leading to school outbreaks and the system shutting down for in person classes again.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Carbys Zimmerman

Gmail

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

Testimony on masking wearing & maintaining 6 ft. social distancing

Helen Lau <lauhelen@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:29 PM

Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Hon. HI 96804

Helen W. Lau
Moanalua High School
2825 Ala Ilima Street
Hon. HI 96818

Dear Sir or Madam:

As a teacher, I am very concerned about the uncertainty around safe practices from the school district office thus far.

First, keeping a 6-feet distance and wearing a mask are our best defense against catching/spreading the Covid-19 virus. I believe that the Center for Disease Control and World Health Organization, along with many medical health experts, agree on these basic measures.

Hence, it makes no sense to me that the HIDOE would allow mask use to be optional indoors at schools. Some people may feel that it would be difficult to enforce since some students would invariably show up on campus without a mask. How about giving a mask to the student then? This is a teaching moment. As a teacher I would model the behavior that I want to see in my students. By the way, this idea is from a dear friend who is a long time head nurse at Queens Hospital and who has seen more than her share of pediatric patients.

Furthermore, why is the HIDOE lowering the social distancing to just 3 feet? Since April, there has been research to indicate that droplets from one person can travel beyond this short distance. On National Public Radio June 21, 2020 reporter Maria Godoy interviewed researcher Linsey Marr at Virginia Tech: "If you're talking, when things are coming out of your mouth, they're coming out fast. . . . I think even a low-quality mask can block a lot of those droplets." As an expert in airborne transmissions of viruses, Marr asserts that "From what I've seen, I would be comfortable sending my kids back to school if everyone's wearing masks and they're staying as far apart as possible." So why would the HIDOE deviate from recommendations from health experts?

When I apply the 6 feet rule to a classroom setup, I envision a class size of no more than 6 to 8 students at my high school. Given the 2,000 plus students, our school will need to schedule classes in such a way to allow students to have in-person instruction two days out of a week, every other week. I don't like this much reduced classtime schedule but I see it as a necessary trade-off to keep class size small so social distancing is possible.

I ask you, as board members, to help the schools set proper expectations for the safety and well-being of the young people and adults on our campuses.

Sincerely,

Helen W. Lau

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kate Madaya <mkmadaya@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 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.

I am a parent of a daughter that is enrolled at Lokelani Intermediate School and a teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy. I feel very strongly as a parent and a teacher that the Hawaii State Department of Education's policy allowing student's desks to be as close as three feet is unsafe and does not protect the students and/or teachers from contracting the virus.

It is bad enough that teachers and students will likely be enclosed in spaces with very little fresh air circulation but to then allow as little as 3 feet between student desks is very unsettling. Please make the health of students, teachers, other staff members, as well as the community a top priority. Also, I am concerned that the Board of Education agreed with the Hawaii State Teacher Association to maintain 6 feet distancing among students and staff according to the Memorandum of Understanding and now it seems the BOE is not abiding by that agreement and instead allowing schools 3 feet between student desks when facing forward.

There is a lot that still needs to be learned about COVID 19 and I do not think students and teachers should be sent into an unsafe situation while we are still learning about the dangers and the spread of this virus. At the very least, insist that schools maintain the 6 feet distancing while in the classroom and other school settings.

Sincerely,
Marie K. Madaya

Gmail

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

6 feet

rara1dutch@aol.com <rara1dutch@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:30 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
It is for all of our safety that the 6 foot rule be mandatory. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Sorry could be the difference between life and death for many of us. I am a first grade teacher who is teaching in the summer hub. Although social distancing is harder in lower grades, the 6 foot rule would help keep them apart in the classroom. Please consider the above.

Gmail

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

Testimony on Distancing In the Classrooms

Tammy Nochi <tammy_nochi@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:32 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.

Tammy Nochi

Gmail

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

Masks fog my glasses and my voice is soft

Noel Leary <nollaig66@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To who it may concern:

Please provide an alternative to masks that fog my glasses and muffle my voice.

Further, masks do not cover the eyes. There are reports that COVID 19 can be spread to the fluid in the eyes. I would appreciate suggestions and would like to pose an alternative. my suggestion is a face shield that protects the eyes and leaves enough room for glasses but is separate from the breathing compartment

Also a microphone could be built in or attached for Bluetooth connectivity to a speaker.

I now this is expensive but it could also be designed and produced at school by kids.

Thanks for listening

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Chan W <chanteldwillis@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Chantel Willis. I am a teacher at Mauka Lani Elementary School. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A). Returning to school where students sit only 3 feet apart does put the health and safety of students and teachers as a priority. Furthermore at Mauka Lani, we are planning to go back with all students meaning about 20-25 per class. If the CDC says 6 feet why would the BOE say 3 feet? I leave with my family and do not want to put them at risk of dying for the convenience of others in reopening schools.

Thanks,
Chantel Willis

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 Miki Cacace and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Ewa Makai Middle School and my daughter will be a 1st grader at Mililani ‘Ike Elementary. I also have a 3 year old son and my elderly mom lives with us.

As a teacher, I do not agree that the 3 feet distancing is sufficient and safe for students, staff, and teachers. I’m not comfortable nor confident that 3 feet will provide enough space between children. The 3 foot distance between desks is not practical and still allows students to turn around to talk to peers, touch each other, or share supplies. In addition, if students are NOT required to wear a mask, germs could spread even more and an outbreak could occur. Our state and nation have imposed a 6 foot rule. It baffles me that this rule doesn’t apply to schools, where hundreds of students, staff, and teachers are interacting.

I strongly feel that requiring students to engage in 6 feet of social distancing in addition to wearing masks will provide an extra layer of safety for everyone. I have a lot of anxiety and fear of bringing germs home, where my family resides. My mom is elderly and has multiple underlying health conditions. Being asked to work in an unsafe environment isn’t what I signed up for when I became a teacher. My family’s safety and health is very important to me and I want to be able to feel comfortable teaching in a safe environment.

Lastly, as a parent I am extremely concerned that schools aren’t adhering to the same rules that have been applied to all businesses and establishments around the nation. I’m not confident in sending my children to school if strict social distancing and masks aren’t enforced. Without a vaccine and COVID19 cases rising, we cannot put our children, teachers, staff, and communities at risk. I care about my children’s education, but their health and safety take precedence over “physically” going to school. I care about my students and want children back in school; however, their utmost safety and health should be a priority.

Sincerely,

Miki Cacace

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jeremy Seitz <jeremy.seitz@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am deeply concerned with the manner in which the response to covid 19 AND the plan to return to school has been implemented. There are contradictions and issues that place everyone associated with every school in this state - parents, students, teachers, staff, administrators, etc., in grave danger.

As a teacher it is my responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for my students. The critical word is SAFE. Without the implementation of direct, specific, and effective safety protocols AND mandating that EVERYONE adhere to the CDC guidelines of using masks and social distancing at a distance of 6 feet, the learning environment will not only be deemed unsafe, but also possibly deadly.

I have grave anxiety when I think about how we are being asked to return to an environment that breeds common colds, flu, and in certain cases, other very dangerous viruses already. With the emergence of COVID-19, a virus that is clearly deadly and spreading rapidly, I believe that the Board of Education must take a more proactive approach to prioritizing safety over simply reopening. Learning is best achieved in an environment where EVERYONE feels safe, confident, and happy.

Your responsibility as BOE member is to ensure that those of us on the front lines have the resources and dedication to ensure that our students are challenged and pushed to achieve great success. This CANNOT occur when we are operating with the severe threat of a deadly virus. We are ALL at risk. We are not exempt from catching and spreading this virus...you are not safe either. I implore you to stand and pressure the Department of Education to dramatically redesign their reopening plan to prioritize safety AT ALL LEVELS.

Do your jobs. Lives are in danger and any deaths will surely be linked back to the DOE and the BOE leadership's lackadaisical approach.

Jeremy R. Seitz

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

Testimony

Amelia Keefe <ameliak@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am writing to testify About Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. Returning to school is going to be a challenge during this time, but it should not be a challenge that endangers teachers and students. I am a middle school teacher in Ewa Beach and I worry about the spread of Covid 19 when we return to school. We need to have masks before mandatory in the classroom, for students and teachers. We need to make sure we have social distancing in the classroom, all students at 6 feet apart from each other. We need to ensure these to keep everyone healthy, including family members or roommate's that teachers and students go home to. Please ensure that all are safe during this pandemic. Thank you,

Amelia Keefe

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Aspen Billiet <billi180@morris.umn.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Aspen Billiet, I am a Hawaii resident. I am testifying on discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Educations comprehensive plan for reopening school for the 2020-2021 School Year.

While I do not have children of my own attending school I do work out of an intermediate school, working closely with the students, in my community on Hawaii Island and while I understand both the value of in person education for our keiki, and the ease it brings compared to distance learning via video meetings etc. I do believe there is valid concern to have in regards to bringing out keiki back to school this fall. From what I have seen in my community, most schools do not seem to be equipped to handle appropriate social distancing practices and the safety of our keiki, their family and the school staff would largely fall on the shoulders of the students and how well they are able to abide by precautions that will be set in place. If our islands see a spike in COVID19 and it starts within the schools not only does that put our keiki at risk but it puts the vast majority of our state's community at risk as these students of course return home to their own family members each day.

I understand this is an incredibly complex situation full of difficult decisions to make, but my personal stance on the matter is prolonger in person classes a while longer. Better safe than sorry.

Mahalo for your time and your service to the community,

Aloha,
Aspen Billiet

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Gene Silva Jr. I am the son of a public school teacher. I am writing to you to ask that you follow the 6' guidelines as well as require all people on the school campus to wear masks as stated in the MOU. "Six feet of social distancing" and the wearing of masks have been used commonly as a guide for people in Hawaii and our nation. Why is it that six feet is acceptable everywhere else but yet it is okay to work three feet in a school setting? This is not keeping our keiki or school staff safe. It also puts our communities at risk as we all know the schools are at the heart of our communities. The people who work at our schools will be at risk of becoming ill and or taking this dreadful illness back home to their loved ones. How is it safe when you yourselves, as the Board of Education, still meet virtually because of COVID 19? Please keep that in mind as you make your decisions and recommendations. Please act in good faith and follow what was agreed upon in the MOU between HSTA and HIDOE.

Mahalo,

Gene Silva Jr.

Gmail

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

Wear masks

Jackie <jfuyeno@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wear mask... our children need to wear masks to protect themselves and to protect their teachers. It's the law.
Jackie
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

6 feet distancing

Jackie <jfuyeno@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:35 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
Please for the safety of our keiki and teachers, the boe/doe needs to put in effect 6 feet distancing at the school campus and having desks six feet apart in the classroom. I been teaching for thirty years for the pubic school system where we need to be respected and protected during this pandemic. All stores, markets, banks, restaurants have 6 feet distancing. Why can't the classroom have 6 feet distancing ? Teachers and kids need to be taken care of too. I am a wife, caretaker, friend, daughter, and a mother... I don't want to get Covid because of doe will not abide by the cdc regulations. Please get rid of the 3 feet distancing... no one does that... it's 6 feet distancing...
First grade teacher
Jackie Uyeno
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Noelle-Lili Edejer <noelle-lili.edejer@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:40 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

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

My name is Noelle Edejer and I am a teacher at Waipahu High School. I am appalled that 3 feet between students has even been thought of. I will not hesitate to leave my position as a teacher if the board can't do something as simple as protect their educators. Students will be the ones to suffer yet again when the schools need to shut down for a second wave. Please, do your part and require at least 6 feet as the CDC recommends.

--
Mahalo,
Noelle Edejer
Waipahu High School
808-307-9487

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Gmail

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

Testimony

dtakane@aol.com <dtakane@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,
We are submitting testimony on Discussion Item IV(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.
As parents of a student at Waiākea High School we are appalled at the cavalier attitude towards safety of the DOE in suggesting a 3 foot distancing requirement in the classroom. This combined with a relaxed mask recommendation contradicts the guidance set by the CDC. The increased risk to students, faculty, and staff is reckless and irresponsible. In recognition of the potential airborne transmission of the coronavirus we insist that the health and wellbeing of not only the above-mentioned but also those who would be affected by the inevitable community spread be given the highest priority. To do any less would violate the trust of those who you are tasked to protect. Thank you for your time,
Alan & Dawna Takane

Gmail

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

Testimony

Joni Ishikawa <maxjannareid@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:41 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 do not agree with providing our students a 3 ft. wide social distancing in the classroom, even if they are seated forward in one direction

My name is Joni Ishikawa and I have taught for the DOE for the past 25 years. Throughout my career I have experienced students coming to school with coughs, congestion, sore throats, and fevers. I've caught their bug, fell ill, and had to call in sick way too often. Although we discuss and encourage sneezing into our elbows, using tissue to block our germs from getting to others, and washing germs away with soap, my 2nd graders forget to cover up and end up spraying their germs. Adults are more able to monitor themselves. They would fare better with a 3 ft. distancing than a 7 yr. old. Yet, businesses, our State, our University, and the CDC is asking everyone to keep to a minimum of 6 ft. in social distancing.

Please consider what is best for the health and safety of our keiki and staff. Don't cut the safety net of 6 ft. social distancing in half for the children while officials and businesses continue to provide 6 ft. distancing for everyone else. Once this highly contagious disease reaches a student, the classroom could potentially and quickly become a cluster of Covid. I, and many others in my age bracket are at high risk and are in contact with elderly parents. Consider them as well.
Mahalo,
Joni Ishikawa
Wailuku Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Christy Masaoka <xoxo_christy@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:41 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <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 the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Christy Masaoka and I am a teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School.

I am asking the Hawaii Board of Education to please follow the CDC guideline that schools space students' seating/desks AT LEAST 6 feet apart to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19.

If we have this policy in place, it will keep everyone safer, especially if there are times when mask-wearing isn't feasible at the moment. Please do your part in helping to stop this virus. When a policy is in place, it gives people in authority the power to enforce this rule.

There are so many differing opinions on the severity of the virus. However, with a mandatory policy, opinions will not have any power to sway people one way or the other. No matter how they feel about the virus's severity, they will still need to adhere to the rule. This will keep everyone safer.

Thank you for your time.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kanoe Rillamas <krillamas@kaaawaschool.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:42 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 Kanoelani Rillamas and I am the first grade teacher at Ka'a'awa Elementary School. Please require 6 feet of social distancing in classrooms. There is evidence from scientists and doctors that 6 feet of distance reduces the spread of germs. For the safety of our communities, please do the right thing to keep all of us safe.

Thank you for your time and attention.

-Kanoelani Rillamas

Social distancing testimony

jennifer lum <jenniferrolum@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:42 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am a 16 year veteran of Public School teaching in the Leeward district. We already have to deal with the oppressive heat and humidity in the classroom. Now, our leaders are saying that it is OK for us to have a 3 foot social distancing plan in our classroom.

3 feet is not even recommended by the federal government. The COVID19 cases in Hawaii are on the rise. It is not a safe environment. If I contract this virus, I have asthma. It could KILL me.

First, I believe that opening school in three weeks is absurd. There is going to be a huge spike in cases. Especially with teachers. South Africa already has 700+ students and 1000+ teachers have contracted COVID19. Just because it “doesn’t affect the young as much as the old,” doesn’t mean it will not spread. Plus, most teachers are older. Which means, if an asymptotic child comes to school, they spread it to all people in the classroom. Then those students and teachers take it home with them.

Second, this will happen in a 6 ft social distancing plan. It will be way worse with a 3 foot plan. We will not be able to get students into the classroom and keep them distancing from each other. We should not be going back at all. But, since the government is not listening to their teachers, 6 feet should be the least amount of distance between people.

You are endangering the lives of your youth, teachers, and the communities in which they all live.

Please consider not restarting school. If you do not, then we need 6 foot social distancing, masks for all people within the classroom, sanitizer in every classroom, and face shields for all teachers.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Lum
Teacher
Pearl City High School

Gmail

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

Being back in school

Mary Phillips <mphillips872@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:42 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
My name is Mary Phillips. I am a special education teacher at Lincoln Elementary in Makiki.
Currently, I am teaching ESY with three students in my classroom. Social distancing is done easily and everyone in the classroom wears their mask unless they are eating or drinking water. I missed my students and love seeing them in person.
However, it is critical that every teacher in the DOE follow the CDC guidelines for wearing masks and social distancing. My nephew lives in Arizona and school is being delayed as the virus can not be contained.
I am concerned that when school is back in session that schools will not be given the guidance and financial support to insure thst every student and staff are following guidelines and protected from the Covid virus.

Sincerely,
Mary Phillips
Special Education Teacher
Makiki Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mariah Weidenbach <mariah.weidenbach@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:44 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello,
I am an educator at helemano elementary school and am testifying on discussion item VI(A). If 3 feet of distance is safe, why isn't that implemented everywhere? Why is my safety not as important? I am with my students from before 8:00am until end of school. That would be long exposure to individuals outside of my household without masks since masks are not required. I work with other adults in my class from other house holds too who would not be required to wear masks. Why are masks mandated in all public places but not at my work place a PUBLIC school? Where I am at even more risk of exposure being with people for hours a day indoors and not just 30 seconds at a check out counter. I teach children with severe disabilities/autism and they will not face forward and neither would typical younger students who turn to talk and get distracted or older kids who would want to interact and can't be expected to understand the consequences.

I have asthma and live with my grandparents who are both in their eighties. My doctor confirmed I have a higher risk of complications due to Covid 19. I want to be safe at work, and for my family and students to be safe. At least 6ft and masks as a minimum. Or better yet keep schools closed until we work out a better plan all together. I have considered quitting and working somewhere that values my life and my family's lives. Would you want to risk being around people without masks all day in close proximity indoors? 41 cases today-the highest yet, would you want to take that risk with your life? I didn't think so.
Thank you for reconsidering,
Mariah Buffa

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michele Sera <msera001@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:44 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 am currently a teacher at Maui High School and although my last child graduated this past year, I am very concerned that the Department of Education is not standing by their agreement with HSTA, in addition to contradicting the CDC guidelines that children in classroom should be spaced 6 feet, NOT 3 feet, apart.

Please show respect to the committed and loyal teachers we have working for our keiki in the State of Hawaii and support CDC guidelines to keep not just the teachers and students, but the entire State of Hawaii as safe as possible from this contagious Covid-19 virus.

Sincerely,

Michele R. Sera
Teacher
Maui High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

josiah paul orpilla <jorpilla3808@myhta.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Maya Terhune <mterhune@myhta.org>

Aloha,

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 would like to state that agree with the reopening plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. By using the "Guidance For Reopening Schools" I believe that all students, parents, and teachers can make a safe return to school during the time of this pandemic.

Thank you for your time,
Josiah Orpilla,
Hawaii Technology Academy HS Student

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

Testimony

Iwa Leger <iwaleger@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:46 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <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 Irene Leger. I'm a math teacher at Kahuku High and Intermediate and I also have a child, Rachael Leger, that will be in 7th grade at Kahuku High & Intermediate School.

I am writing in concern of the plan to reopen schools in 3030-2021. I feel it important to make it mandatory to wear masks (or a mouth & nose covering) on campus and in classrooms. The act of wearing a mask is supported by both CDC & WHO and there is a lot of recent data that shows that wearing a mask can help prevent spread. Here are two reports from studies that show how mask may help prevention of spread in the classroom:
-The transfer of droplets, https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0843-2#Sec3
-The decrease in growth in places that require mask as opposed to places that do not require a mask: https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00818

As a parent, I will make my child wear it because it is important for her to know and understand that it not only prevents her from getting it but also helps in preventing her not to spread it.

As a teacher, I want it to be mandatory in my classroom. It is a good habit that we can all learn for future use for the continued prevention of COVID & other viruses' to come. I know that it might be harder to learn and to teach, but I am willing to work a little harder so that my students and co-workers are safe!

thanks, Irene Leger
808-769-7925
55-616 B Iosepa St Laie Hi 96762

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Deanne Cha <deanne.cha@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:47 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year in STRONG disagreement with the Hawaii Department of Education's decision to re-open schools with students sitting only 3 feet apart. The BOE must mandate that all classroom desks by no less than 6 feet apart. I am a public school employee who is at-risk for COVID due to age and pre-existing health conditions, with family members in the public school system.

The DOE must think Hawaii's students and school faculty are expendable. You all must be fine with putting ALL the residents of Hawaii's lives at risk by doing something so DESPERATE as to cram student desks less than 6-feet apart. The excuse saying the kids are facing the same direction is weak at best. Cases are rising and hit a 1-day all-time high increase this past Tuesday. There is increasing evidence that COVID particles can be airborne, and children can get sick/be asymptomatic carriers, infect staff (such as myself), and then family members will be infected. This will lead to the general population being the next casualties, and force another shutdown which will hurt us economically. All because the DOE won't do the right thing and instead cave to POLITICS.

I think you all do understand the gravity of this situation, which is why you are holding this very board meeting virtually, to avoid being in a large gathering. UH campuses have been forced to maintain 6 feet social distancing, so why are public schools not doing the same? Either the biology of children is different than other humans, or the DOE is cutting corners at the expense of children's health. I have spoken to over dozens of fellow community members, many with school aged children, and they all have said they are uncomfortable with the DOE's 3-feet plan, and some are considering not sending their child to public school this year until this is resolved. These are unprecedented times and nothing is easy. But do NOT use schools simply as a convenient baby-sitting service to allow Hawaii's workforce to resume. Don't ever forget that people's health and safety are the priority. It seems like the DOE are not practicing what they preach and instead are fine with sacrificing a few lives, which I am not ok with.

LESS THAN THE CDC RECOMMENDED 6-FT DISTANCING IS **NOT OKAY FOR HAWAII SCHOOLS!!!**

Gmail

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

School reopening

Detina Santiago <detinasantiago14@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:47 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have many concerns being a teacher of a special education classroom during this reopening. With only a three foot separation students who don't understand the basics of covering their nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing will not be far enough from their peers to ensure droplets will not reach others when they sneeze and cough. Masks need to be 100% mandatory unless a medical condition prohibits the use of one. Three feet with no masks is an inadequate amount of space to keep students and faculty safe. I understand that space in classrooms are limited and parents are pushing for a full return but safety and health should be the primary focus here. Right not it does not seem like the teachers or students health is being taken seriously. It started with "school will not open until 4 weeks with no new cases" to "school will reopen but it will definitely look different" to " let's bring all the kids back at once 3 ft apart, no masks in classroom, and no temperature checks". Essentially school is resuming as normal with no real precautions taken. I don't feel safe going back to work with these conditions!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Jamie K <jamie96740@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:47 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 for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintains the importance of adequate social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Pointing out that "COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period" on its website, the CDC states "since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay at least 6 feet away from others when possible, even if you--or they--do not have any symptoms".

Scientists have just submitted studies that indicate the COVID-19 virus can be grown from air samples, strongly suggesting that it is an airborne spread virus. The emerging scientific evidence, combined with already established national health guidelines, give us no room to relax our safety standards as infection rates continue to increase across our nation.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, we have seen time and time again that our best defense against spreading the virus is the combination of 6 feet of social distancing, practicing good hygiene, and wearing masks. As a teacher, parent, and caregiver to an immunocompromised elderly parent, I cannot fathom how the Board of Education would see it fit to relax known safety measures that can prevent potentially fatal exposure to a highly contagious virus. At a time when higher learning institutions within the state and local businesses continue to adhere to the CDC guidelines of maintaining 6 feet of social distancing and wearing masks, I vehemently object to any proposed measures that result in relaxing social distancing guidelines within the densely populated public school system of Hawaii.

If we cannot reopen our schools in a safe manner, the answer is not to compromise safety standards to the detriment of teachers, students, and school staff. Instead, efforts should be focused on adjusting the way in which we reopen to ensure we adhere to the established standards. As educators, it is our responsibility to model professionalism, citizenship, and self care. Imagine the look of confusion on our students' faces when we go over the CDC guidelines as a trusted source, only to see the blatant contradiction of policy pushed by the Board of Education.

Sincerely,

Fumi Koizumi-Droge
Teacher, Kealakehe High

Gmail

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

Testimony

Julie <jamperkins@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:49 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

June 7, 2020
Dear BOE,
Please do ALL that is necessary to keep our children, their families, and everyone in our state safe.
Little children are constantly talking and touching each other. To them, everything is a toy and a distraction. Children are going to play with their masks and they are not going to keep them on their face all the time. For this reason, children need to be spaced a minimum of six feet apart.
This virus has brought the whole world to their knees and we all need to do our part to combat it.
Mahalo for putting our health and safety first.
Be Pono,
Julie Perkins
State of Hawaii DOE Teacher for 20 years

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

Testimony

Rwashburn <Rwashburn@marisco.net>
Reply-To: Rwashburn@marisco.net
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:48 PM

To Whom it may concern,

I don't understand why the BOE doesn't think that the children aren't important!!!!! I'd bet anything it has to come down to money. I have copied/pasted the below directly from the CDCs interim guidance/guidelines.

- **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.**

Why can't the school utilize SEESAW? I found that to be a very positive learning tool that we used when the Coronavirus first showed up.

Why not implement strategies to continue education and related supports for students.

- **Ensure continuity of education.**
  - Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of teaching and learning. **Implement e-learning plans**, including digital and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
    - Determine, in consultation with school district officials or other relevant state or local partners:
      - **If a waiver is needed for state requirements of a minimum number of in-person instructional hours or school days (seat time) as a condition**

for funding;

- **How to convert face-to-face lessons into online lessons and how to train teachers to do so;**
- How to triage technical issues if faced with limited IT support and staff;
- How to encourage appropriate adult supervision while children are using distance learning approaches; and
- How to deal with the potential lack of students' access to computers and the Internet at home.

I DO NOT SUPPORT the BOE's proposal to reopen schools with the distancing of desk @ 3' apart!!! Again, the virus is spread mainly from person to person, between people who are in close contact, (less than 3') with another person. I will do whatever it take to keep my grandson from sitting @ a desk in school where something as simple as another child's cough from 3' away will put his life in danger.

Signed a very concerned grandparent,

Rashel Washburn


This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.
www.avast.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kaylyn Glancy <kaylynglancy@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am testifying 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 Kaylyn Glancy and I am a first grade teacher at Mokapu Elementary School.

As The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended, schools should “space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible” to reduce risk. By allowing student desks to remain 3 feet apart is endangering everyone in the schools. This would be the students, students' families, teachers, teachers' families, all school staff as well as their families and any individuals the people previously mentioned come into contact with. My dad came down with an unknown viral illness 6 years ago that still affects him today. He is no longer able to be a cardiologist, he cannot drive, has multiple neurological issues and still feels sick everyday. When allowing students to sit so close to each other, it is endangering my dad everyday I walk into school. My greatest fear is bringing COVID-19 home and his body is not well enough to fight the virus off.

When allowing students to sit 3 feet apart, there is a greater risk of exposure. First grade students have a challenging time keeping their hands to themselves and they love to share with their friends. They will turn and talk to their friends while working and will need opportunities to stand up at their desk throughout the day. However, if the 6 feet apart is enforced, the risk of exposure will decrease. Teachers will be able to better assist in students keeping their hands to themselves. The distance allows more room for students to stand up and stretch without being too close to their peers. With the desks separated 6 feet apart, we can better protect our island ohana.

I ask you to please reconsider your stance on spacing student desks. Think about the risk you are asking of every single person who attends and works at the schools. Think about the risk to all of our families. If our job is to minimize the spread of COVID-19, then give us the distance we need to accomplish this. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

--
Mahalo,
Kaylyn Glancy

Gmail

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

COVID-19

Carl Kim <dominis1329@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this matter. It is important that a more uniform approach be taken by our State in dealing with this pandemic. This applies to all the different pieces on the board.

In all of the discussion and standards with social distancing 6 ft. Is the norm. The proposal to go to 3 ft. Creates new problems and invalidates any protection for social distancing at 6ft. There has been new research about the aerosolized virus particles that can survive for quite some time and at farther distances from the source. The 3ft. Distance is not adequate enough and heightens the danger of getting infected. It would allow more students into the classroom but elevate risk. Teachers deserve better! They Should not be placed in a more dangerous position.

The ideal classroom may be 15 students per period. Maybe two classes a day (30). 5 day week=150. There would be office hours (2 hours) aside from the classroom
to do phone/computer interaction. The rest of the learning will probably be remotely done with students using the classroom time to do “seminar” type meeting/class to address any problems/questions that come up in the learning. Helping the students in this way appears to be the least restrictive and most productive. Seeing the student in person, as usual may not be back for some time. The traditional/forma method of instruction is being heavily debated nationally for the universities. Paying the large tuition and not getting the traditional teaching is changing students and parents goals/objectives. The long term implications of the remote only learning is not positive for most students.

The schools need to gear up with more counseling and health support in the schools. Teachers can’t do all of this. Administration needs to get their sleeves pulled up and solve problems.

Thank you, Carl Kim

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

Testimony: Masks and Distancing

Monica Kramp <monica.kramp@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:49 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

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 very irresponsible that the DOE is saying students can be placed 3 feet apart while facing the same direction and masks will be optional.

The CDC and all guidelines I have been reading clearly state that the minimal safe distance is 6 feet apart WITH masks.

I am a first-grade teacher and I have been teaching summer school with 3 incoming first grade students. They cannot sit facing the same direction for the 3 hours I have them, BUT what they CAN do is wear their mask, IN my classroom, for the majority of the time without any issues.

Disregarding the CDC's guidelines of 6 ft and mask wearing will just cause more cases and the potential for a full school closure, again.

Please reconsider these guidelines and prioritize health and safety for everyone involved. Masks and6 feet distancing should be mandatory. Teachers and students need the proper protection.

All other essential workers, stores, and businesses are protected with mask mandates. What makes schools a smaller priority?

Sincerely,
Monica Kramp
1st Grade Teacher
Waihee School

Gmail

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

Mask, distance

Loralee Mauri <kylekm1234@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:50 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

6 feet mandatory, mask mandatory.

Haiku Elementary
Teacher L. Mauri

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Elaine Higa <elainelu62@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

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 Hoang Higa. I am a district resource teacher for the Ka'u Kea'au Pahoa Complex Area. My son, Ethan Higa is in the 2nd grade and attends Waiakeawaena Elementary School. I am 36 years old who is battling leukemia and do not feel that a 3 ft distance is enough to minimize the risk of COVID-19. I would like to return to a safe workplace and have my son in a classroom that will practice the 6ft distance.

Please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configure with six feet between student desks.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Hoang Higa

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jessie Sugahara <jsugahara808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Jessie Sugahara. I am a Kindergarten teacher at Kilauea Elementary School on Kauai. 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 a mother to two young children, my daughter who is 2 and my son who is 5. I write to you as a teacher but above all else, as a mom. I ask you to please honor the 6 feet social distancing between students in the classroom. I am a Mom who doesn't spend a minute away from my children that I don't need to. If I am exposed to Covid (particularly within 3 feet of a student) and need to quarantine from my family, it would be an agonizing two weeks for us all. I would be devastated. Not to mention my children. My son will be starting Kindergarten this year at my school, and I want to know that he is also in a safe environment at school. If we only have to practice 3 feet between each person, this nearly doubles our potential class size and makes keeping space nearly impossible (Particularly in a Kindergarten classroom). Please honor 6 feet social distancing, as this is what everyone, in school or not, should be practicing to keep us ALL safe. Mahalo, Jessie Sugahara

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Nikki Martin <nikkiraemartin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Nicole Martin and I work at Kahului 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.

As a pregnant teacher, I am incredibly disappointed that mine and my future child's health and safety are not being concerned. 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.

Mahalo,
Nicole Martin
Kahului School
Curriculum Coordinator

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year in STRONG and LIVID disagreement with the Hawaii Department of Education's decision to re-open schools with students sitting only three feet apart. The BOE must mandate that all classroom desks by no less than 6-ft apart. Originally, I think that reopening schools is a terrible idea with cases of COVID-19 still rising on a day to day basis; but on top of that the DOE wants to not only reopen schools (putting not only the students but the FACULTY AS WELL in danger) but also ignore the CDC's recommendation of students sitting 6 feet apart. This is an absolutely preposterous and asinine decision and only reflects the poor leadership and decision making of the DOE. I understand that this is an unorthodox situation, but that does not make it acceptable to dismiss and ignore the safety guidelines so that schools can reopen and the DOE can use the schools as babysitters knowing that the school setting is one of the hotspots for COVID-19 transmission, which will only lead to a spread towards the general public. Whether this is your intention or not, this is what will happen. Schools should not be used as a babysitting service to allow parents to return to work and help reboot the economy. This is selfish and irresponsible. The DOE has to use their heads and think of not just the students, but the TEACHERS and FACULTY as well who work alongside the students. Around 40% of Hawaii's teachers and faculty are older and may not be as resilient to COVID-19 compared to students. The DOE is fine with allowing students to sit 3 feet apart because they are not the ones who will be in the classroom with the kids. The teachers and educational assistants are. So I beg of you, please, show some empathy and put yourself in the shoes of the faculty. They have homes to return to and loved ones who care and worry about them. I am the daughter of both an elementary school teacher with pre-existing health conditions that place her in the high-risk category and the sister of a high school science teacher, and I am constantly worried about my family being in class and being in such close contact with the students while cases in Hawaii are not only prevalent but rising as well.

I understand that it is dire for students to return to school and parents to return to work in order to save Hawaii's economy, but if the people of Hawaii are sick or dead due to COVID-19, there won't be an economy to save. If the DOE does not change their (foolish) decision and continues with the plan to reopen schools, then it should be done in an effective and safe manner: by following the CDC's recommendation and spacing the student's desk 6 feet apart. I am incredibly disappointed with the DOE and implore that they change and get their act together to not only save the children, but the PEOPLE of Hawaii.

Gmail

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

6 ft distancing

J U <jmu432@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

In reference to the 3 ft. distancing, I would like to request that it be changed to 6ft. As reported on the news, covid is on the rise for children. In light of this, we must protect our children as well as the staff in all schools. The public is asked to distance themselves 6 ft, so it doesn't make sense for the schools to disregard this. If even one child is infected, covid can potentially spread throughout the classroom and school in an instant. Therefore, I am asking that social distancing in schools should be 6ft. along with masks being mandatory.

Thank you,
Jamie Umemoto

Gmail

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

Testimony

Donna Iwaishi <diwaishi@weis.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi.
I am a general education prekindergarten teacher. I am very excited to be able to teach my students in person. However, I am concerned that the BOE is putting my students, their families, my family, educators and our families at risk by stating that a three-foot distance is safe. The CDC guidelines state students should be six feet apart.

Think about your young children or grandchildren. Would you feel safe sending your prekindergarten child to school with only three feet separating them from their peers during these times? I am whole-heartedly in favor of face-to-face instruction being the best for our little ones. However, I do not want to comprise the health and safety of anyone. I think your decision on this matter will show the public where your priority lies. Show that you care about students, their families, educators and our families. Mandate the six feet distance rule. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Donna Iwaishi

--
Donna Iwaishi
Prekindergarten Teacher

Waimanalo Elementary & Intermediate School
41-1330 Kalanianaole Hwy.
Waimanalo, Hawaii 96795
(808) 259-0460 x283

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>

TESTIMONY

Mio Sato <mio.sato@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:56 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 a teacher at Pearl City High School, and I ask that DOE requires all schools to implement 6ft distance between students and teachers, instead of 3ft.
Although my principal decided to use 6ft rules at PCHS, if other schools implement 3ft rules, our school is no longer safe because students' siblings or faculty's children (who attend another school) could bring the virus home and spread into our school.
It might seem enough distance sideways, but if you imagine how students will act in the classroom (face friends, talk without masks, touch each other etc.) 3ft is NOT far enough to keep them safe. And teachers can't be the distance/mask police while teaching lessons and helping students in need.

To keep all children, faculty and families safe, all schools should implement 6ft rules, just like shopping places and any other public spaces.
Please do not allow 3ft distance and require 6ft for Hawaii DOE schools.
Thank you.

Mio Sato
Japanese/Freshman seminar teacher (CAHSL academy)
Rm C-202, (808) 307-5618
Pearl City High School
2100 Hookiekie St, Pearl City, HI 96782

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Gmail

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

Opening of public schools

csyama <csyama@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I disagree with the DOE's plans to open the schools. Masks need to be mandatory and distance between students have to be 6'.
Corliss Yamasaki

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

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

Concerns about school year 2020-21

janinekawazoe <janinekawazoe@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

July 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I teach at Naalehu Elementary School on the Big Island and have been a public school teacher with Hawaii DOE for 21 years.
I have great concerns about returning to school this coming 20-21 school year with the relaxed restrictions of less than 6 feet social distancing (only 3 feet) & not making the use of face masks mandatory for everyone.
The reasons for my great concern are that in recent years, I have undergone cancer surgery, treatment and still am required to take medicine daily for the cancer (to ensure that it doesn't return) and therefore, I don't have the strongest immune system. In addition, I assist my 86 year old mom who doesn't live in the same household several times a week to help her out with things that she may need.
I am an only child and my dad passed away many years ago, so I am the only one who can help my mom. That being said, should I need to return to work with way too relaxed COVID-19 measures, I am very anxious and afraid that not only will this greatly jeopardize my health and safety, but it will also directly impact my mom and have possible ramifications for her health and safety.
Thus, I plead my case to you to seriously reconsider all of the COVID-19 health & safety systems for the 20-21 school year that HSTA has requested to be in place in order for the utmost health & safety of all teachers, as well as the fact that we, as teachers, will all be on the front line during COVID-19 to teach our keiki and therefore, we need substantial systems in place in order for daily, successful learning to occur in our Hawaii public schools.

Thank you for your kind attention & consideration,

Janine Kawazoe
Grade 2 teacher
Naalehu Elementary School

Sent via my Samsung Galaxy, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Adrianne Hale <adriannehale@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

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

I am a public school teacher at Holualoa Elementary School on Hawai'i Island. I am very worried about the reopening of schools in this time of Covid-19 with the dangers it imposes on our families and communities.

The HIDOE has stated that within a cohort or class that a 3 foot social distance without face masks is safe. This contradicts both the CDC guidelines of social distancing and the CDC guidelines of wearing a mask. HIDOE's stance on this will endanger the lives of our students, teachers, families, and kupuna. It will increase the chance of community spread which we've worked so hard to limit.

The BOE and HIDOE should be working toward the safe reopening of schools by offering teachers telework options whenever possible; advocating for improved infrastructure for online learning, especially for high schools and middle schools where the majority of students do not require adult care; and ensuring safe bussing with CDC social distancing and not the current two students per seat standard.

I agree that schools play an important role in the social-emotional well-being of our keiki, but if our keiki, their loved ones, or someone from their school 'ohana greatly suffers or God forbid dies as a result of unsafe school reopening, we will have undone any good we have sought out to do.

I ask that the BOE work with HIDOE to overturn this decision and advocate for safe practices as promoted by the CDC in the reopening of our schools.

Mahalo,
Adrianne Hale

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Jenna Wash <jennawash@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,My name is Jenna Calasa and I work at Pukalani 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.
As a pregnant teacher, I am incredibly disappointed that mine and my future child's health and safety are not being concerned. 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.

Thank you, Jenna Calasa
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Evelyn Sasamoto <esasamoto@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 12:59 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 Evelyn Sasamoto. I teach Japanese at Kealakehe High School in Kailua Kona.

The U.S. CDC recommends that schools keep at least 6 feet apart to reduce risk of infection for space seating/desks. Hawaii's DOE's decision to reduce that to 3 feet apart is incomprehensible. It goes against the advice of our nation's leaders and experts. It puts our children and teachers at unnecessary risk.

Further, it violates the resolution passed by the BOE that claims the health and safety of students and staff are the priority and negates the thoughtful consideration of the Board's guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness, all of which the BOE says are the fundamental driver to reopen schools.

Students and teachers deserve the same safety parameters as are set for grocery shopping, dining out, and other public settings including universities. Our high schools should be a safe haven for our students, faculty and staff. The same rules that apply to the public should apply to our schools.

As a senior citizen-teacher, I am part of the 30 to 40% of educators who are at high risk for COVID, due to age and health factors. I love teaching and strive to find ways for my students to be successful. This does not include sacrificing the safety of my own life.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Sasamoto
Kealakehe High School
Japanese Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony- Reopening of Public Schools

Kelly Calistro <kelly.calistro@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for 2020-2021 School Year.

Aloha-
I am a Social Studies/Media Teacher at Moanalua High School. This will be my 31st year teaching there. I am in the high risk bracket due to my age and also because I will be having a brand-new grandson any day in addition to taking care of my 80 year old parents. I am concerned that by teaching face-to-face and having students only 3 feet away from each other will pose a major risk factor to me, my ohana and students involved. With the increasing number of COVID cases daily, I am hoping that the Board of Education would start the reopening of school with distant learning for the first quarter then gradually go back to school when the virus is under control.
Since promising my Principal that I would not retire until June 2021, I would like to keep my promise to her without endangering my loved ones. Please consider not only the parents and students involved, but also the **teachers** who give their blood, sweat and tears to educate our keiki of Hawaii.
Mahalo,
Kelly Calistro- Moanalua High School Social Studies/Media Teacher

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>

Regarding reopening schools

Jasmine Wallace <jasminejpwallace@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a parent of a student at Barbers Point Elementary School. I am addressing the re-opening of the Department of Education schools. I am in great concern of the procedures and protocols that state has put in place. I don't think keeping a distance of 3 feet will stop the contamination of airborne disease. In addition, I don't think the state has put an effective plan into place. As an educator myself, I worry about the contact with students. I worry that it will be impossible to constantly keep items sanitized. I worry about the lack of staff that will help implement these procedures.

I don't know how with Covid-19 cases on the rise daily do you think that re-opening schools is a good idea. Please for the sake of the children and employees please reconsider the start date of school until the cases have declined or until you have a better plan.

I would love to return to work and have my child in school, but not at the cost of our lives.

Thank You,

Jasmine Wallace

Gmail

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

Testimony

Carol E. <mrsencomienda@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I hope this email finds you well and safe.

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 Caroline Encomienda, a public high school teacher at Waipahu High. I have nephews and nieces who attend Kaleiopuu Elementary and Waipahu Intermediate. I totally disagree with the HIDOE policy allowing students' desks to be as close as three feet to each other in classrooms and face coverings only outside classrooms when school resumes in August. I feel that this policy is "ludicrous and dangerous" and puts our keiki, their families and teachers like me at risk.

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

In colleges, six feet distancing and face covering are required. At stores like Costco and at restaurants, six feet distancing and face coverings are required too but why is it that for public school teachers and students, it is only three feet and face coverings only when outside the classroom? Should the same rules apply and be followed in the public schools.

As an 11th-12th grade teacher, my students are in their teens and well built in size and three feet is not enough space in order to keep them safe. They need the space to distance themselves safely from each other even if they have the urge to say something to another peer. Since they are older students, they should be wearing face coverings to protect themselves from one another.

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 practice physical distancing of six feet and face coverings even in the classroom.

I believe 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. Under PPE, all individuals including employees, students and campus visitors should wear face coverings that cover the mouth and nose consistent with public health guidance."

So why is the DOE returning to a three-foot policy and face coverings outside of the classroom after coming to an agreement with HSTA on a six-foot standard and wearing face coverings?

A recent event in the news where a Waipahu Summer Fun employee tested positive for COVID-19. If this happens at three (3) feet distance and without face covering, COVID-19 could easily spread to our keiki, their families and my own family.

I am willing to do anything for my students, but that does not mean I am willing to die. Every precaution must be taken to ensure the health and safety of our keiki, their families and teachers like me.

Respectfully,

Caroline Encomienda

Testimony: 3 feet is unacceptable!

Ian Nagao <ian_nagao@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:03 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: TESTIFYING ON DISCUSSION ITEM VI(A): PRESENTATION ON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S COMPREHENSI VE PLAN FOR REOPENENING SCHOOLS PLAN FOR 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

THURSDAY, JULY 09, 2020

Dear Board of Education Committee members:

My name is Ian Nagao. I am a science teacher at Keaau High School in the Keaau-Pahoa-Kau District on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am submitting testimony asking the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with at least six feet distance between student desks. The safety and well-being of our students and teachers should be the primary concern of everyone involved especially when the CDC indicates the high risk involved for the spread of COVID-19 without face coverings and minimal social distancing (less than 6 feet apart). I have children of my own attending Waiakea Elementary and Waiakea Intermediate School and I feel that their lives and well being would be jeopardized if CDC recommended guidelines are not followed and taken seriously. Please reconsider configuring student seats and desks to at least 6 feet apart. Doing so will help our staff and keiki prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure their safety to the best of our ability.

Thank you,

Ian Nagao, Keaau High School Science Teacher, Keaau-Pahoa-Kau District, Big Island of Hawaii

Testimony

dawn bischoff <dyoshimo@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:04 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Dawn Bischoff and I am a teacher at Kawananakoa Middle 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 3 foot distance within classrooms. Why is it 3 feet when all other recommendations everywhere else are 6 feet apart?

Also, everyone should be required to wear masks - teachers, students and staff. Students should not be exempt as they can still infect others, even if they are asymptomatic. Though Covid may not be as serious in kids, it doesn’t mean that they aren’t capable of catching the virus and won’t spread it to others. I have asthma and don’t want to take the risk of getting this illness and spreading it to my own family, many of whom have asthma too. It is scary and stressful enough going back to work and seeing students everyday face-to- face, but to have the added stress of knowing that I may get Covid because a student doesn’t feel like wearing their mask or there is an outbreak because they are sitting too close to each other....that is unacceptable; especially when this could’ve easily been prevented.

The BOE needs to do everything it can to protect the health and safety of all students and employees because all it takes is one person to start an outbreak.

Sincerely,
Dawn Bischoff
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Maile Becka <maile.becka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:05 PM
To: 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

To the Hawai‘i Board of Education,

My name is Maile Becka and I am a 4th grade teacher at Kanu o Ka ‘Āina NCPCS in Waimea on Hawai‘i Island. I am writing to implore you all to reconsider the DOE's proposal for student desks to be placed at a minimum of 3 feet apart when school resumes in August 2020.

I am a fortunate adult who does not have any underlying health concerns. However, I live with my mother who is considered kupuna age and is therefore in the age demographic that is highly susceptible to the novel coronavirus. Typically, in my 11 year teaching career, I have been a carrier for most germs elementary aged children bring to school. Each year my mother contracts a minor cold. The symptoms of the common cold cannot be compared to those of the coronavirus, but knowing that I bring home germs has me greatly concerned that I could possibly bring home coronavirus "germs".

I desperately want to return to school in August. I miss seeing my students smiling faces and watching their eyes light up with engagement and excitement when learning something new. However, I also want to be safe and don't feel that my health and well-being should be at the expense of the desire to reopen schools or at the expense of safety.

Every bit of information presented by the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Health indicates that maintaining a social distance of 6 feet and wearing face masks is highly recommended, along with frequent hand washing, to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. I truly believe that this is the best course of action we have as adults to keep our keiki and teachers safe at school.

I strongly urge the BOE to honor the contractual agreement between the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association and the Department of Education and have desks within each classroom spaced no less than 6 feet apart.

Mahalo nui loa for taking the time to hear our testimony and for keeping the best interests of the students, teachers, and other school staff of the state of Hawai‘i at the forefront of your thoughts during this time of pandemic.

Sincerely,
Maile Becka

Gmail

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

Testimony for Discussion Item VI (A)

Cherilyn Harrison <mrsharrisonshive@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:07 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.

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Cherilyn Harrison and I currently teach first grade at Enchanted Lake Elementary School in Kailua. I am writing to you today to urge you to honor the contractual agreement made between the Department of Education and the Hawaii State Teachers Association. The Memorandum of Understanding between the state and the HSTA states that "schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread […] 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, hallways, and exterior school grounds wherever possible." It also says that "all individuals, including employees, students, and campus visitors should wear face coverings that cover the mouth and nose consistent with public health guidance." The CDC has recommended that we maintain a six-foot distance from others and to wear face coverings inside and outside! We need to follow their guidance! We cannot claim to be putting our keiki first if we do any less.

My classroom counts as a meeting space – we are in the classroom for most of the day – and six feet of social distancing should be in place as much as possible, especially while students are in their individual work areas. All desks and work areas should be placed at a minimum of six feet apart in all directions. Supermarkets and other businesses and services are all asking customers to stand six feet apart. Why is the DOE attempting to relax this standard for students? Many students are still learning self-control and good hygiene practices. Every year, I get sick like clockwork in the Fall because germs are passed around the classroom. It almost can't be helped! Getting a cold is one thing, but I am terrified of bringing COVID-19 home to my family. My parents are in their seventies and have underlying conditions. Like me, many students and faculty live in multi-generational homes. I am asking for your help to give students and staff the best possible chance to stay safe and healthy! We need to minimize the risk of bringing COVID-19 home to our families, especially to our Kupuna and others who are susceptible to this disease.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Cherilyn Harrison

Gmail

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

Masks & Social Distancing

Kimberlee Peterson <kimberlee001@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:08 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Like many other teachers I am concerned about the safety and well being of all not only at my school community but all school communities state wide. As we all know simple routines and interactions on campus have to be completely altered. As a teacher with a portable classroom, I am even more concerned about social distancing and am hoping ALL will be required to wear masks inside always and hope the 6ft requirement will be upheld. I have no idea what logistics will be/look like especially in this situation.

Thank you for your time,

Kim

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony re: Discussion Item VI(A)

Katie Hearl <katie.hearl@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:08 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 am a middle school teacher on the island of Maui. I feel compelled to share some thoughts that I've had the past few weeks as conversations around school reopening are becoming more and more frequent.

First of all, I do not believe that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a comprehensive plan. 11 pages is not a comprehensive plan. There are so many unknowns and I fully and completely understand that we won't have an answer for every "what if" question, but there are basic and simple logistical questions that have not been answered. In New Jersey, teachers have been creating an ongoing Google Document asking questions related to reopening, all of which are valid questions that I'm curious if our State has taken into consideration. That document is 27 pages long. The original guide to opening schools that the state put out is 104 pages giving much more information than our 11 page document does. I have attached it for your reference.

Second, I do not believe that it should be up to principals and teachers to develop their reopening plans. It absolutely baffles me that there are not island-wide plans where ALL stakeholders have a voice. There is already a lack of consistency and misinformation among schools and complexes as plans are developed, which in my opinion, will only continue once reopenings occur. There is already misinformation going around on island as far as schools' reopening plans. I believe that the entire first quarter should be online and then slowly phase students in as the year progresses and as we evaluate our situations. I also find it foolish that we are planning to reopen schools the same time that tourism is scheduled to open in Hawai'i. Any good Science teacher would tell you that if you open both at the same time, you don't have a control variable. We won't know if cases are increasing because of tourism or because of schools. Consistency among schools, complexes, and islands is key to keeping everyone safe and healthy.

Finally, in the MOU it says that 6 feet of distancing so that "schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread...by maintaining six (6) feet". By allowing the DOE to allow 3 feet of social distancing, that violates the MOU. Please enforce 6 feet apart. On another safety note, all students, teachers, and staff NEED to wear face coverings, otherwise we are all at risk and risk bringing it home to our families (which include elderly family members).

I feel that at the rate we are going, full steam ahead, we are NOT in a position to safely and successfully open schools again in less than a month. Our case numbers are going up now, even without schools opening or tourism. I implore you to do what is right for our teachers, keiki, and communities. We need a plan, a real plan, with answers to basic safety and health concerns that we all have right now. If not, kids will get sick. Teachers will die. All the work that we have done to flatten the curve will be null and void.

Thank you,
Katie Hearl



On June 26, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education released "The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education". This 104-page document outlines the guidance the department suggests districts follow when they reopen school buildings in September. Educators recognize that opening buildings for in-person learning is vital, but public health must take precedence. Educators and other staff members who interact closely with students have been left with questions and concerns after reading the guidance from the state.

Inspired by David M. Aderhold and the Garden State Coalition of Schools' "283 Questions about School Reopening", this document is a crowd-sourced list of questions and concerns NJ school staff believe must be answered in order to ensure the safety of educators and students. While we recognize that administrators are dealing with a myriad of issues, they are not the ones who will interact with dozens to hundreds of students each day, often in schools with no air conditioning, poor ventilation, and more. All of these questions come from school staff who interact with students on a daily basis- teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, and other staff with constant student contact. We hope that the NJDOE and Governor Murphy will rethink the plan to allow local districts to make decisions and will instead create a statewide plan (as they have for all other Covid-19 related issues). There is no reason districts should be left to answer these questions individually.

If you are an educator/school staff please submit questions by clicking here.

Contact: Sarah Mulhern Gross, NBCT
saraid@gmail.com
@thereadingzone

High-Risk Staff/Students and Accommodations

1. How will immune-compromised staff or students be accommodated? If people have conditions on the CDC's list of higher risk factors are districts required to provide further accommodations?
2. Will accommodations be standardized from district to district?
3. Will non-tenured teachers qualify for health accommodations?
4. How will non-tenured teachers feel comfortable advocating for themselves without fear of removal?
5. How will schools get substitutes during this time when there is already a shortage? Many subs are also in the high-risk category due to age.
6. The CDC now considers pregnancy a high-risk health concern. What options will staff who are pregnant have? Will they need to meet specific criteria?
7. Will there be requirements for staff to qualify as "high risk" and therefore be allowed to use leave?
8. The state has indicated that staff and students with specific illnesses should be given the option to remote teach/ teleschool. What about someone who is a caregiver for a

medically complex young child? Mt child qualifies under the guidance to stay home, but if I have to go into work daily I risk bringing it home to her, therefore not allowing me to fully protect my child. What options are there for people like myself who care for someone who falls into the vulnerable population?

9. Is any consideration made for staff who cannot limit exposure due to living with essential personnel, like law enforcement, medical, or grocery employees? What about students who live with essential personnel?
10. When deciding which teachers qualify to teach remotely due to elevated risk, who determines the parameters of what counts as higher risk? A doctor? The insurance company? A building administrator? Other?
11. Will staff/students be required to disclose specific medical issues in order to qualify as high-risk or will a doctor's note deeming them high risk be sufficient?
12. To whom will staff members have to disclose medical conditions that qualify them as high-risk? Will their information be kept confidential? What about disclosing the health concerns of family members who are high risk?
13. If a staff member is immune compromised and not comfortable returning in September and chooses to take FMLA, is the 12 month waiting period still in effect if that staff member later becomes ill/pregnant/has a sick family member within that 12 month period?
14. If a para with longevity is immune compromised and chooses not to return, is their job still secure? Is there ability for paras to work from home until their doctor deems it safe to return?
15. What accommodations will be made for educators/their families? For example, many staff members have children in other districts that may choose different models of school with split sessions or hybrid learning how will that be handled?
16. Will staff who have more training and expertise in virtual instruction be given priority in leading virtual classes for students who cannot attend in-person classes?
17. Will there be a cap on sick day usage for older staff who have accumulated more than 50 days? 75? 100?
18. If students are allowed the option to stay home, can staff who are compromised, or live with someone compromised, also opt to teach from home?
19. Can staff who have breathing issues use face shields in place of masks?
20. Will 504 accommodations be made for staff in buildings without air conditioning who many now require AC due to wearing a mask? Conditions like COPD will likely require AC.
21. If we aren't comfortable going to school to teach once plans are laid out in our district, can we opt to do so remotely? Will we be guaranteed our jobs?
22. Will districts offer before school care and aftercare?
23. Will educators receive priority treatment, similar to that offered to other frontline workers, for childcare?
24. A recent survey found that at least 1 in 5 teachers are unlikely to return in the fall due to Covid-19. According to the USDOE, New Jersey has teacher shortages in Bilingual/Bicultural education, Middle School (all subjects), ESL, Mathematics, Science

(All), Special Education, World Languages (All), and Career and Technical Endorsements (All). How will this shortage and the loss of up to 20% of our current teachers affect teaching responsibilities?

25. Will districts offer more money for substitutes since the risk of infection is high? Will districts cover health insurance costs if a substitute gets sick as a result of working?
26. What are the options for educators who care for elderly parents who can no longer attend adult day programs (because they are closed or because of health concerns) and they are unable to stay home alone?
27. What are the options for staff who may live with immunocompromised individuals that are not immediate family members? Will the family unit be defined in the same way bereavement days are handled? Can contracts be reopened to broaden the definition of family? For example, will a couple need to be legally married in order for a staff member to be qualify as high-risk based on a medically fragile family member?
28. Will small children and babies be viewed as high risk and their parents considered for remote learning or accommodations? How will parents that have taken FLMA this year for pregnancy be compensated for time off due to Covid?
29. Will consideration be given to allowing staff to enroll their own children in the district where they work in order to allow their children to follow the same schedule as the employed parent?
30. If an older teacher is worried about returning to school and is thinking about retiring will there be packages offered?
31. If we contract the virus at work, will we be able to claim workman's compensation since it occurred in the workplace? This seems especially importan since it could take months to fully recover from the illness.
32. If a teacher or their family members gets Covid after returning to work but had requested to work remotely and was denied can the district be sued for liability?
33. What do teachers do about childcare for their school-aged children if they are expected to be in school full time but the students are on a hybrid plan? If students are only in school some days and forced into some kind of childcare other days, we are increasing the risk/exposure that these students return to school with after being in alternative childcare settings with students from other schools/communities.

Student/Staff Health and Safety

34. If a teacher dies from COVID contracted while at school, does the state still pay their surviving spouse the MBOS Life Insurance payout?
35. Who will be held accountable if a second wave of COVID is caused by reopening schools?
36. Since masks protect others from the mask-wearer, is the state's position that teachers and staff do not need to be protected, but students need to be protected from us?
37. How will educators be supported financially if they become permanently disabled by the virus contracted, possibly, at schools?
38. Will the state attendance laws be changed so students/families aren't compelled to come to school sick?

39. Why has the state, to date, moved as a single unit (rather than regions or counties), but will leave school openings up to individual districts?
40. The opening guidance from the state seems to be built on the idea that airborne transmission is based on droplets not aerosol, therefore masks, hand washing, cleaning surfaces, and 6 ft distancing are the mitigation strategies. Emerging research/data/opinion is that transmission MAY be aerosol, in which case the issues become air circulation, treatment, filtering (HEPA), and respirators vs. masks. If the state determines that a local restaurant can not serve socially distanced patrons in a heavily climate controlled atmosphere, due to safety concerns for a small group for about an hour, how is it possible to suppose large groups of students and staff can work in a non-climate controlled, hot, humid (think mold), non filtered area for 4+ hours/day?
41. Are teachers going to be required to tested on a regular basis as a requirement for working?
42. How does hybrid schedule make sense? If it's not safe to go everyday, how is it safe to go one or two days a week?
43. Will there be a limit to how many students one (elementary specials) teacher should be exposed to (teach in person in the same room) each day, each week, and in total? There are clear limits on how many students should be in a room with each other, so what about the number of students per educator? As a teacher who works with about 1000 total students at a time, and exposed to them over a span of 8 school days in my previous schedule, I'm concerned.
44. Will staff need to sign a waiver to work?
45. Will students sign a waiver protecting staff in the event a student gets sick while in their class?
46. Will families need to sign waivers of disclosure if they've been exposed or tested? Do we violate privacy laws by asking?
47. Will teachers be required to sign waivers promising not to hold the district/school responsible if they get sick? If so and they refuse to sign it, will they lose their jobs?
48. What about staff bathrooms? Will someone be sanitizing them in between uses or will the staff members be required to do so?
49. What safety measures will be put in place for non-teaching staff such as school counselors? Our offices are not large enough for social distancing and we often deal with students in crisis.
50. What proof will any of us have that the students returning to school are not currently living with someone who is positive for the virus, an asymptomatic carrier, or currently sick with it and concealing it from the school?
51. Will the policy of requiring teachers to share rooms stop so that we aren't sharing germs with even more people (especially if we are on split schedules)?
52. Many districts are already requiring 12-month employees to be in the building working without appropriate PPE. How can staff and students trust districts to implement the guidelines correctly when 12-month employees are already being put at risk?
53. Will there be consequences if administrators do not wear masks or follow social distancing guidelines? What recourse will staff have in these situation?

54. In districts/school where staff have to sign in for work with a finger scan, how often will the Kronos machines be sanitized?
55. For those educators who cannot wash their hair every day, will a head covering similar to a surgical cap be acceptable for daily wear?
56. Will after school staff meetings still be required in person or will they be held virtually in some way?
57. If staff are not permitted to congregate outside of their cohort and students are eating lunch in the classrooms, when do staff get a duty free break? Similarly, what about specials? Is the classroom teacher expected to remain in the room to avoid congregating outside the cohort? Will this be considered a duty? And if so, will we be compensated?
58. What safeguards will be put in place for the mental health and well being of the staff?
59. For someone such as myself who is asthmatic and has an office with no windows and poor ventilation, wearing a mask all day will be impossible. What options will I have to maintain my full-time status?
60. Will disciplinary actions based on attendance (many districts require meetings, letters in flies, etc after x number of sick days taken) be suspended during this time?
61. Most Board of Education meetings have been held via Zoom since the quarantine. In September, will the BOE meetings return back to school districts in person?
62. How will contracted bus companies be held accountable for cleaning/sanitizing procedures?
63. Were professional organizations consulted for each content area? Will groups like NJMEA, NJCTE, the West Jersey Reading Council, etc be included in developing further guidelines?
64. Many schools are not air-conditioned and scientists have brought up concerns about heat exhaustion brought on by masks. What is the state's plan to mitigate this risk?
65. Who is ensuring students have access to a clean mask each day? There are families that can not afford masks or can not wash masks every day.
66. Heightened emotions and fear-based anger abound in the midst of this virus; with anxious staff trying to enforce new and unnatural procedures, especially in schools where there is already an issue with the disproportionate discipline of black/brown students, we must make sure students are not being unfairly disciplined. How will this be done?
67. Will staff be able to remove masks while actively instructing? My biggest concern is wearing a mask all day because my classroom is on the second floor of a building with no air conditioning. It is already difficult to breathe on the hottest days and it takes a physical toll; staff and students go home exhausted on those days. I know I could handle a mask all day if we had air. I am just not sure if I can do this when my classroom reaches temperatures in the high 90s.
68. Given the logistical challenges implied via Dr. Aderhold's essay (and the list of issues/questions already compiled by educators on this list) doesn't it make sense on a number of levels to shift classes outdoors as much as humanly possible if a school can do it? It would have its own daunting logistical issues no question, but none more than

what we will face indoors, and the tiebreaker-- and a BIG one-- is that prolonged indoor exposure has been shown to be far riskier than outdoor exposure. If we shift outdoors, will tents/heaters/needed supplies be provided?

69. If a child is exposed to COVID at school due to the child taking their mask on and off during the day, is the teacher responsible for this? Would families be allowed to sue?
70. What is the policy for contact tracing?
71. Will districts provide us with N95 masks as they seem to provide the safest protection? Will there be fit testing and physicals performed per PEOSH regulations?
72. Will the changes to the Chapter 78 Relief be put on hold for at least another year since it requires more copays for a much lesser medical plan? This is coming at a time when staff and support staff may need more medical care/attention. In the future, will Covid-related longterm effects of the illness be covered by our district insurance?
73. Will the Covid blood tests, nasal test, or mouth swab tests be offered in each building/district for students and staff needing quick and timely results? Currently, you need to make an appointment and it may take days. It can also be a transportation issue for many of our families/students.
74. What health concerns will allow staff to not wear a mask? There are staff with sensory disorders and medically-treated anxiety who are unable to wear masks at this time.
75. How will PLCs and other in-person staff meetings be organized?
76. Will bus drivers be able to take students' temperatures at their bus stops prior to getting on the bus to avoid them even coming to school if they have a fever?
77. Many parents give their children Tylenol before sending them to school with a fever. Has consideration been given to doing temperature checks mid-day?
78. Will students or staff who exhibit symptoms be required to show a negative COVID-19 test to return to school or work?
79. How will lockers work? In many buildings students share lockers (or they are on top of each other). If they opt out of using them, do they just carry around a book bag all day congesting the halls even more? Student backpacks are often safety hazards in classrooms (they lead to tripping and falling).
80. Will there be an aide on every bus to monitor distancing and mask use, since the bus driver will be focused on driving?
81. Will there be mandatory caps on class size?
82. Will there be mandatory measurements for social distancing? Most classrooms can not do 6 feet, but then I fear that schools will say ok we are spliting your 36 students into 2 groups.
83. Will schools be allowed to choose not to practice social distancing?
84. There are high school students who work essential jobs and volunteer as first responders. What precautions will be put into place to support them in this important work while protecting their classmates and teachers?
85. A May 2020 study out of Germany found “The viral loads [of Covid-19] observed in the present study, combined with earlier findings of similar attack rate between children and adults, suggest that transmission potential in schools and kindergartens should be evaluated using the same assumptions of infectivity as for adults”. This combined with

studies of healthcare workers have found that viral load plays a role in whether or not frontline workers become infected with Covid-19. Has any consideration been given to the viral load teachers may be exposed to? Specials teachers and content area specialist (secondary) are often exposed to hundreds of students.

86. Will staff and/or students have the right to opt out of Covid-19 testing or temperature checks?
87. If non-staff individuals enter the building (parents, coaches, substitutes, etc) will they be required to participate in contact tracing in the event of exposure?
88. I was not able to get a critical procedure for my health because my superintendent was not able to share if the student that had COVID and caused our school to shutdown was in my class, classroom, or even my hallway? We are asked to fill in a questionnaire with truthful answers when going to different appointments to stop the spread, without this info, how are we to do this?
89. Parents routinely send sick children to school by dosing them with medication to mask symptoms. Parents also do not report illnesses and do not keep their children home for an adequate amount of time (24 hours fever free WITHOUT medication). Strict guidelines have to be adhered to for the safety and well-being of staff and students. How will districts ensure that parents do not violate these rules (which have been in place for years and are routinely ignored)?
90. Many districts sends sick children (fever, vomiting, etc) back to the classroom to wait for parent pick up and this can take hours. How can we ensure this will no longer happen?
91. Remote learning can be done in a meaningful way. However, the state has made it clear that in order for the economy to restart parents need schools to open. Does the state view teachers as babysitters?
92. For teachers returning from maternity leave or nursing mothers in general, how will they be provided with adequate (and legally required) time and space for pumping/a lactation room? How will this work specifically at the secondary level with scheduling, class coverage, and a lactation space while still following guidelines and the plan for return? If adequate pumping time and space cannot safely be provided, will nursing mothers be allowed to teach remotely with no punishment?
93. We have more cases in the state of NJ than we did before our initial switch to remote learning. There have been no major innovations in treatment/ prevention. Is the state of NJ reopening their schools for the right reasons?
94. Will substitute teachers receive training on all new protocols?
95. Will long-term subs be given the same considerations as tenured or tenure- track employees?
96. Will districts that do not allow for sick days for long-term subs reconsider this in light of the pandemic?
97. If a teacher suffers longterm effects after contracting Covid-19 at work, will the district guarantee that their health issues will be covered for the remainder of their employment?

Quarantine/Self-isolation

98. If a student I am in contact with tests positive will I need to quarantine? If so, do I lose 14 sick days? What if a staff member has to quarantine multiple times in a school year?
99. If a staff member's child needs to quarantine will the educator parent be required to use their sick days?
100. If one student tests positive for COVID-19 does that mean the teacher and the rest of the class have to quarantine for 14 days?
101. We often have students who are sent home sick and are out for days without ever visiting a doctor. If a student is out for several days after being sent home with symptoms consistent with COVID will parents be compelled to provide proof that the child has been tested before we allow them back in the building? If a parent refuses to provide medical documentation, will we presume the entire group has been exposed and then all (students and staff) be required to quarantine?
102. What will the professional expectations be for staff while they are on a 14 day quarantine period?
103. If a CST member has to quarantine for 14 days because a family member is sick, will they be allowed to work from home for a period of time, by way of Zoom meetings, report writing, etc?
104. Will there be options available if someone lives with a compromised family member and is forced to quarantine similar to the accomodations that were made available to hospital workers?
105. If a staff member who has secondary employment that does not interfere contractually with employment in school had to quarantine due to coming into contact with a student would the district reimburse that employee for loss of wages from secondary job? If that employee had to quarantine due to contact from secondary employer, would they have to use PTO or will there be some kind of allotted time separate from PTO days for instances such as this?
106. If an educator IS an "essential worker" on the side and/ or summer (EMT, cashier, etc), how will that be looked upon by a district?
107. If a teacher is required to quarantine and use sick time, who will create the lesson plans and how will long-term subs work?
108. What if staff members have to self-isolate more than once due to exposure from a COVID positive student?
109. Can all staff members choose to work remotely if they are forced to self-isolate due to exposure? Who will decide if a staff member can work?
110. If a staff member does not have enough accumulated sick leave to cover a mandatory quarantine and is not tenured and covered by FMLA, will their pay be docked?
111. Will schools be allowed to hire recently retired educators to help with virtual instruction and or support?
112. How will it be handled when there are not enough subs to cover classes when teachers are out? In the past when not enough subs were available (a common occurrence), classes would be combined in the library or other large rooms and

supervised by a single teacher or couple teachers. Teachers were often pulled from other duties to act as subs, too.

113. The document from the state lists symptoms which would cause students or staff to stay home. What about students and teachers with chronic conditions that also have those same symptoms? Would staff be required to use sick days for things like allergies, migraines, muscle aches... all of which can be from non- COVID health issues, but which are also symptoms of COVID?
114. Will there be specialized, paid training for staff to prepare before the first day of school for all these changes?
115. Many staff travel between schools. How will this be handled?
116. Many substitutes work for multiple districts. How will districts know if substitutes have been in a “hot spot”?
117. If a child in one school gets Covid, and they are in contact with a specials teacher who goes to multiple buildings each week and teaches every child in that building, will all schools that teacher has been in have to quarantine?
118. Different states are handling Covid-19 differently. What if a staff member (or their spouse) has to travel to a hotspot in order to drop off or pick up their college student? Will they be required to quarantine? This is a question that needs to be answered quickly as parents are getting ready to bring their college students to school.

School Nurses and Health Staff

119. Will schools be hiring more school nurses, custodial staff, and counselors?
120. Will there be a nurse in the building every day?
121. How can one nurse be responsible for screening 500-1000 students/staff daily and still be available to perform every other function required?
122. In buildings with a single nurse who also teaches health classes, will the district ensure that a nurse is always available to see sick students? If so, how will health be taught?
123. Will there be dual offices for nurses, one to handle Covid symptoms and another to handle first aid and other health issues?
124. Will parents be required to pick up sick students in a timely manner? Many parents are not available during the day and sick students can spend hours waiting in the nurse’s office.
125. Will school nurses (and anyone that works in that office) be held to a different standard regarding the definition of what is considered being exposed?
126. Does every student whp complains of a Covid symptom get sent home? When do we decide if we think the child is being truthful about his symptoms (I have kids coughing on purpose, pretending to be sick, belly aches for anxiety, asthma-related coughs that can last for weeks/ months, runny noses constantly with the little ones.)
127. Will nurses still be required to do all Yearly Health Screenings, and if so, how will this be done with social distancing guidelines?
128. The use of nebulizers for administration of asthma medications could aerosolize COVID-19. Will the use of nebulizers be prohibited in the health office?

129. Some students must visit the health office regularly for medication and some of these student must be escorted due to health concerns (low sugar and the possibility of passing out, for example). Normally a trusted peer/friend is entrusted with this. What will happen when students must social distance in these cases?
130. Who will be responsible for contact tracing? Will school nurses be required to take the contact tracing course?
131. What will be done if a family refuses to share information for contact tracing?
132. How will districts obtain funds to have sufficient nurse staff to implement the actions needed to maintain health and safety of students and staff in school- specifically: creating an isolation room; administering medication (especially nebulizer treatments), giving first aid, checking blood sugars and performing other non-illness related medical services like vision and hearing screenings while maintaining social distance in a 1 room health office?
133. Will the State of NJ and/or the NJDOE guarantee School Nurses will have access to N95 masks and other needed PPE to ensure health and safety as their job requires them to have an increased risk due to direct physical contact with student/staff & body fluids? Who will be responsible to provide “Fit testing” for N95 mask as required for their use to be effective?
134. There are times during the school day when the bathroom in the health office is the only open bathroom in some schools. It is not unusual to have a line as long as 10 to 12 students waiting. Does the bathroom have to be cleaned between each student?

Daily Classroom Routines

135. Will teachers be required to livestream all classes for students who choose virtual instruction? What are the privacy issues with this? How will teacher privacy and student privacy be maintained? Can a teacher refuse to livestream their class?
136. If split sessions are used to help with social distancing/decrease class sizes, will the minimum number of hours be waived to count a half-day of instruction? For example, if a half-day is 4 hours and one group of students attends in-person morning session while a different group attends the afternoon session, that will go past the normal contractual teaching hours.
137. Will we be able to do any group work/peer interaction in the classroom or will it be strictly teacher led instruction with no grouping or pairs?
138. High schools have been linked to significant transmission of COVID, likely due to the large number of students interacting daily. How can we protect students and staff while providing engaging lessons?
139. In normal circumstances a teacher needs to get someone from the office or someone on prep to cover their classroom if they need to use the restroom. What happens if we are in cohorts and are not supposed to mix? Will teachers only be able to use the rest room during lunch?
140. How will social distancing work in classrooms with more than 10-15 students?
141. One possible model describes keeping students in cohorts and having teachers switch between rooms. Who will watch the students when staff members need to rotate?

142. What will the protocol be for a classroom with no sink and the requirement to monitor bathroom numbers in situations where many students share a single bathroom?
143. Who is building the barriers between the students if there is not enough room to space them 6 feet apart?
144. How will grading work (especially if some students remain at home)? Online assessments vs in-person assessments are entirely different.
145. Will bathrooms have monitors to ensure only X amount of children enter at a time?
146. Since many of the conditions that were present during remote learning which caused students to withdraw, not engage in learning, become depressed, etc. will still be present (lack of socialization, isolation, etc), how will those students who refuse to come to school, or log in for a virtual lesson, be evaluated for grades?
147. Guided reading groups are composed of small groups in the early grades. Will we still be expected to form guided reading groups if small group instruction is discouraged/not permitted?
148. “Social distancing must be practiced in classrooms and on buses. If students can't be seated six feet apart, barriers should be installed between desks or desks should all face one direction” (from “The Road Back”). What does this mean - *OR they must be facing the same way*? Does it mean that if there are 35 students in a small room, and if they are all facing the teacher, it’s ok? Who determines if a classroom is safe?
149. What happens in buildings with no air conditioning and no windows to open?
150. What happens to fire drills? Active shooter drills? Evacuation drills? These are done multiple times per month and require close proximity.
151. The guidelines recommend keeping doors propped open. Will Covid precautions overrule active shooter precautions?
152. Will teachers be allowed to use our sick and personal days? Will we be required to teach remotely if we are sick?
153. What if a teacher or assistant needs to use crisis prevention intervention (CPI) with a student? If a child is in crisis, and needs CPI, but is spitting and biting, how do we protect ourselves?
154. Why are students given an option to not wear a mask? If students are required to wear a mask in retail stores (regardless of social distancing), why are schools different? Acocrding to the CDC, if you are well enough to be outside without requiring supplemental oxygen you are medically able to wear a mask.
155. What about classes/grade levels that require close contact and collaboration for content and social-emotional development?
156. How will my health be protected if students do not have a mask? If a student is not wearing a mask then will the teacher help that student from a 6-foot distance, as otherwise the teacher will be put at risk?
157. When students eat lunch, they need to take off their masks. What is the procedure if a student sneezes? How will staff ensure that students do not share food/utensils?
158. How will staff in the younger elementary/special education classes teach reading/sounds to kids when students cannot see the teacher’s mouth or hear correctly with a mask on?

159. With the state recommending open windows, what about temps outside? And what about those classrooms (I am a replacement class teacher for special education students) in proximity to very distracting outdoor environments, like next to recess areas, or after school pickup areas where parents line up 30 minutes before dismissal? Several classes in our building need to keep shades down during periods of the day to help students from being distracted, let alone open windows.
160. How can teachers provide non-verbal cues like a desk tap if maintaining social distance?
161. The state recommends keeping windows open when possible. What about students and teachers with allergies?
162. Why was there no mention of school libraries or librarians in Gov. Murphy's guidelines?
163. Will teachers and students be permitted to use classroom libraries in English classes?
164. If staff have to travel room to room who will sanitize teacher desks and materials in each room between classes? Will time between periods be longer so that staff can gather materials, use the restroom, and get to another room?
165. If split sessions are used, whether it's half days or alternating days, how will we ensure all standards are being met? Elementary staff teach all subjects in a normal day; with less time in schools will these requirements be lifted or altered to meet only core subject standards (reading and math)?
166. How do you keep a physical distance from students who need your help at their computer stations throughout the class period?
167. How will we ensure that people are adequately warned that they've been exposed?
168. Do one-to-one paraprofessionals have to stay 6 feet from the child they work with?
169. Is there a ratio of adults to children that are allowed to be in the classroom?
170. If there are two teachers in a classroom will that be allowed or would they have to be split into two sessions? Gov. Murphy states that he did not want small group learning to occur since it would not follow social distance practices, but co-taught classes utilize small groups all day long.
171. What if students are browsing the shelves in the librart and we don't know what they're touching? How do we disinfect computers in the media centers and computer labs?
172. Are staff personally responsible for enforcing masks/social distancing? How are we legally protected if students -expectedly- have trouble following the new rules in our classroom and become sick?
173. What social/emotional/psychological support and training can be offered to ensure that staff do not allow their own fears of the virus to interfere with being able to offer calm, compassionate discipline in regards to enforcing new procedures?
174. In classrooms where social distancing is impossible, students will sit in single desk rows, wear masks, and have barriers between rows. How do staff get to individual students? The aisles will be tight (the furthest I can place my desks is about 2.5 feet. I know from trying this layout because of behavior issues) and we are adding a

much-needed barrier that takes up space. How will staff reach students to offer support if they can't walk down the aisles? If the barriers go on the desks, will they be able to clip on one side? Desks are already cramped when you try to use a textbook and notebook or binder.

175. What will the protocol be for students who soil their mask (allergy sneezes, vomit, etc). Are they required to bring a backup or will the school provide it?
176. Since students are not allowed to share supplies, who must supply the pencils, glue, etc? Me? If they don't have the supplies or lose them, is it my responsibility to supply them? Do I then become responsible for disinfecting all supplies and surfaces? If I need to disinfect between students, who is supervising them while I do?
177. What about students who cough and sneeze frequently due to allergies or the common cold? Will they be allowed to remain in school without the required masks even though they might be positive & asymptomatic?
178. Will teachers be responsible for monitoring masks? Students may need multiple masks per day due to contamination, so who will hand them out?
179. Will districts be required to become 1:1?
180. Given the lack of testing opportunities, will seniors be exempt from the state test of record requirements again this year?
181. Will staff be required to teach both in-person and remotely at the same time? If yes, will we be given extra prep time for this?
182. What procedures will be put in place to ensure that materials which go back-and-forth between school and home, such as backpacks, coats, notebooks and lunch boxes, have not been exposed?
183. If a student in our class tests positive, will we be told?
184. If students pretend to cough or sneeze on each other or a staff member, how will this be handled at a disciplinary level?
185. Will individual staff be allowed to require that students wear masks in their classroom?
186. If a student tests positive, what does that mean for the rest of the students in the class?
187. If a staff member or student comes down with a fever will they be required to get tested for COVID-19 and provide the school with documentation of the results?
188. Will students be allowed to participate in any type of group work? How will peer or teacher conferences for writing work?
189. I have no bathroom in my classroom- if a child sneezes and coughs how do I have them wash their hands? Do I have to keep leaving the classroom to chaperone them?
190. I teach on a 2 person team, teaching ELA and SS. My partner does the Science and Math. Who will be switching, the staff or students? If the students are switching who handles supervision in the hallways while we're cleaning desks off?
191. Elementary children do not connect with staff well unless they are in close proximity to them. What accommodations will be provided for students, such as larger screen projections of staff for close up work?

192. Will fans and/or AC units be installed in all classrooms to ensure the air is circulating and the room stays at a decent temperature for those who are wearing masks?
193. If students are required to stay in their classroom cohort the entire day and not move from class to class , and all rugs and other furniture are removed to try to accommodate the 6 feet - are we saying that elementary school students will remain seated at desks for 5 hours a day? Despite all that we know about learning and movement?
194. Will students be permitted to wear reusable masks with sayings on them?
195. With approximately 400-600 students on a floor at a time in some schools, and with a limited number of bathrooms, how are we monitoring usage so that they aren't overcrowded?
196. A large part of STEM class involves engineering and building. Will student projects be allowed to be stored in the classroom if students require more than one class period to complete?
197. How will teachers be expected to conduct reading assessments that are usually 1-on-1 in close proximity to observe reading behaviors? Reading conferences?
198. Governor Murphy stated that indoor dining has been postponed due to the fact that the virus is " more deadly" indoors when people don't follow social distance practices and don't wear masks... two things that can't/won't be done in most school settings. Why are the lives of teachers and students seemingly more expendable than an indoor diner?

New Staff Responsibilities

199. This is a quote from the state restart plan: "Staff roles will also have to expand to accommodate new health and safety regulations." What exactly does this mean? Are we cleaning and disinfecting classrooms?
200. And what exactly does this quote mean: "Instructional and non-instructional staff schedules may also include designated time to support school building logistics required to maintain health and safety requirements." Does taking temperatures become a duty? Can teachers refuse these duties for health reasons
201. If teachers have extra duties such as temperature checks and regular cleaning, will there be compensation?
202. What protections will be offered for teachers during their duties, such as hall duty (have to touch each bathroom door and smell for vapes/ cigarettes) and lunch duty (where students have no masks on)?
203. What protections will be put into place to ensure that specialists are teaching their discipline, and not being pulled to teach other disciplines that lack appropriate staffing due to limited staff (i.e. gifted teacher subbing for an art teacher)? Many schools are sure to be understaffed and with subs already low in numbers I want to be protected and not taken advantage of just because I am healthy and low risk.
204. If staff are in class instructing students all day, who is responsible for online instruction for the students whose parents choose to keep them home?
205. Will districts be provided the funds to hire more staff so that there will be enough "manpower" to teach both in-person and remote classes?

206. Remote learning requires immense amounts of preparation and behind-the-scenes work, including rewriting curriculum. Will teachers be compensated for this work?
207. Will districts be permitted to have content area teachers teach outside their content/certificate area? If so, will teachers have any say in this?
208. Will districts be permitted to reopen contracts and alter previously agreed upon agreements?
209. Elementary school teachers create lesson plans for all subjects. Secondary teachers create lessons plans for multiple preps in their subject area (English I, English II, Algebra 1, Geometry, Precalculus, etc). How do teachers prepare lessons and teach BOTH virtual and in person instruction? Will they be expected to do double the work for the same pay?
210. Districts in Georgia have announced that teachers will do temperature checks when students enter their classroom. Will NJ consider this? If so, will teachers be protected from malpractice lawsuits if a student gets sick?
211. Will teachers be compensated for the extra duties required to make school safe or for having to teach both virtually and in person?
212. If some teachers are remote with no extra duty periods while others arein school with duty periods and additional cleaning responsibilities, how will equity be obtained?
213. The brunt of digital learning fell on content/classroom teacher. If remote learning is necessary in the fall, how can we make sure teaching assignments are equitable?

Secondary/Content Area Classes

214. Why is remote learning not being considered for the majority of high school students? (Certainly, some special ed students may need to be in person. But the bulk of teenagers can use technology easily.) Ensuring that each child has access to technology at home is far less expensive than, and medically preferable to, on-campus instruction.
215. What about vocational schools? Many of them hold half day hands-on classes that are unable to socially distance due to class sizes. The students travel to and from home schools that will likely be on many different schedules. At the same time,virtual learning is also a challenge due to the natural of the material- culinary, cosmetology, masonry, electrical, etc? Is there a risk that these programs will be shut down temporarily?
216. High School students are young adults. Some are even already adults! They should be following the same guidelines they would need to at a retail store. While there may be rationale about younger students not being able to wear masks at school, why is there not a requirement for these young adults to wear masks? Why are high school teachers not afforded the same protection that we are giving to other "frontline workers", such as cashiers?
217. How will work study or structured learning experience be handled? Different work environments have different protocals for health and safety in the workplace. What protection is in place for SLE coordinators visiting various job sites?

218. What about secondary students who switch classes up to eight times each day? If they are asking us to clean every desk, how will we do so in the 3-4 min passing time and properly prepare for our next class?
219. Secondary students can not stay in cohorts as they have individualized schedules- different levels of math, different foreign languages, different electives. How can we protect students and teachers when they will be exposed to hundreds of students on a daily basis? This is especially important because high schoolers may choose not to wear masks.
220. Our secondary school lunch periods already from approximately 10:15 am until 2:15 pm (depending on the building) and we have hundreds of students in the cafeteria. We already serve breakfast in the classroom and after school programs have snacks immediately after the school day ends, and the students report being hungry due to their lunchtime schedule. How could we possibly extend out the lunch schedule any further?
221. Many buildings utilize a unit lunch where the entire school eats lunch at one time. That won't work in September, but the schedule doesn't allow for more lunch periods without adding additional staff. Will teachers become lunch aides?
222. If group work is being discouraged, will AP labs be eligible for some exemptions from College Board? Will the state approach the College Board about this?
223. How should science labs be handled? I know that I'm not planning on doing them because it would be impossible to social distance, not to mention that I have one set of goggles and aprons that all classes share.
224. Specific to hs/ms science classes with labs: for curricula that include labs, are those still required or will districts allow for virtual labs and simulations to replace in-person labs (some have not, including ours). It's not possible to have lab partners socially distance or face the same direction at all times, and equipment and materials are limited.
225. If we can't conduct science labs while social distancing, and districts eliminate the lab periods from the schedule, will the state require that they be reinstated after the pandemic is under control?
226. If we need to pivot to virtual labs will the district be providing those resources? There are fewer and fewer free services and most commonly used ones (such as pHet) often still run off Java, which can't run on a Chromebook (which is the only thing many schools can afford to provide to students).
227. Do students in the lab need to have fire retardant face masks?
228. We have class sets of textbooks for a lot of our courses, so how is the sharing/cleaning of shared resources being handled? (Desks, books, pencil sharpeners, art supplies, etc?)
229. How will districts recognize the necessity of lip-reading and interpersonal communication in world language classes?
230. Many schools have struggled to deal with students vaping. How will this be handled in addition to mask requirements? Will students vape behind masks?

Pre-K and K

231. State-funded preschool programs in Abbott and expansion districts have most of their requirements listed in regulations, legislation, and specific administrative codes. These requirements include class sizes, ratios of adults to children, types of materials, program quality ratings(ECERS and TPOT), mandated curriculum adherence, daily routines, toileting and diapering, wrap-around services, assessment, meal service, and more. Will these regulations be relaxed or adjusted to accommodate the necessary safety steps?
232. In Pre-K classrooms where children nap, how often must their cots be sanitized? Who will be responsible for cleaning their cots before and/or after nap time? How will toys in Pre-K classes be cleaned before the PM session enters? Likewise before the AM session the next day. Who is responsible for cleaning?
233. What will be the protocol for Pre-K and special educators? We provide playtime, reading time, and also toilet training. What will be the transition for these types of classes?
234. In public pre-K programs, teachers and paras are expected to change diapers of students who are not potty trained. How can this be accomplished while maintaining social distancing? Also, teachers regularly have to help students clean themselves while toileting. How can this be done safely?
235. How can kindergarten teachers help/console incoming kinders who are scared and crying, sometimes clinging to mommy, while maintaining social distancing? I can't imagine not being able to hold a hand and tell them it's going to be ok.
236. When it comes to younger students, our curriculum is play-based and hands-on. How will play-based learning work? (Blocks, games, manipulatives, puzzles, kitchen, puppets, play-doh, cars, etc) Also, who will be required to clean all these? And how often?
237. There is very little in regards to early childhood education in "The Road Back". It mentions that it is "impractical" to have them wear masks. Is it a requirement or not?
238. If young students wear a mask, who is responsible for constantly helping these children keep their masks on? A teacher who is constantly fixing the masks of 10 other students? Would the teacher be required to wash their hands every time they touch a student because they are enable to do so on their own?
239. How will this affect young students when one of the main purposes of early childhood educationis to learn to share and learn social skills? Will children be getting in trouble for the very things we would in fact LIKE them to learn such as share, invite other children to sit with them, engage in conversations? Will we create an unrealistic routine and social mannerisms we will then have to undo?
240. In a preschool classroom with two separate groups/cohorts being maintained, can the groups switch sides on alternate days after proper cleaning and disinfecting in order to allow for different interest centeres to be set up?
241. Will sand boxes and water area stations be removed in pre-K classroooms?

Evaluations and Standardized Tests

242. How will teacher evaluations be handled? Will the state continue to use the Stronge and Danielson models of evaluation? Many of the components will be impossible to implement if we are following social distancing guidelines.
243. The guidelines are a complete 180 from the collaborative environments staff have been encouraged to facilitate (and are evaluated on). How will our curriculum change and who will make the changes? When will the changes be made?
244. How will staff be evaluated on the many standards that require collaboration (professionally and in the classroom)?
245. Will the state modify the professional development hours required in light of travel restrictions and social distancing concerns?
246. Will state tests be suspended or modified to account for the fact that all curriculum was not covered last year, thus requiring teachers to take time this year to "fill in the gaps" before continuing with the regular curriculum for the grade level?
247. Given that the DOE has said schools must be prepared to pivot to remote learning at any time wiill SGOs be suspended again this year?
248. In many districts there are district level personnel who travel between buildings to conduct observations and training. Will these employees be limited to a single building?
249. Is it possible that for the duration of the pandemic state testing is suspended and the monies school districts allot for testing be diverted to funding district readiness?
What symptoms will prevent students or staff from attending school/boarding buses? Will this be uniform across districts?

Special Education and Related Services

250. How will special education classrooms be run? Many of these students will not be able to wear masks or any PPE and their teachers often provide help with bodily functions. Will these situations be considered even more high-risk?
251. If a staff member's responsibility is to provide a direct service to a student (i.e. counseling) and a student is not wearing a mask (because it is voluntary for them to do that) can the provider refuse to meet with the student due to concerns of their own safety and well being? What if the related service is indicated in their IEP? Is the provider then being non compliant with the IEP?
252. If there is a rotating schedule for students (go in abc ; stay home def)- how do related services provide? Do we continue Teletherapy? What parent would want their child pulled out of the only classroom time they have?
253. Shared services staff often share workspaces in small offices. Will they be provided with their own space?
254. Will staff be required to continue making home visits for therapies?
255. Regarding OT and PT therapy gyms, multiple students are typically seen by therapists at the same time and many of those students have a 1:1 aide or private duty nurse. How are we supposed to socially distance while treating the students? Many of the activities we do to meet the IEP goals and objectives need to be done in the gym. Also, what about shared equipment such as standers and gait trainers? Who is in charge

of sanitizing these pieces of equipment? How are therapy rooms sanitized after each session? Are the therapists responsible?

256. What about specialists (i.e. ESL, BSI, interventionist, etc.) who pull out of classrooms, how will that be handled? Many times because of scheduling issues we are forced to pull students from different classes into one group (which can vary from day to day), which goes against the idea of keeping the same students together in cohorts.
257. Could related services have the option of working from home and providing teletherapy for most services and only go in for most severe kids?
258. Will the CST be expected to evaluate students with six feet of social distancing in place? Also, will we be expected to have our CST meetings with parents in our offices or can they be done virtually? How will related services, Speech, OT, PT, teacher of the deaf, be provided if we are social distancing?
259. Many special education classrooms, especially those designed for children with Autism, do not have desks. The staff members work one to one with students, so how will they be able to social distance?
260. Will therapists need to wear gloves when physically guiding student's movements?
261. Will LDTCs, SLSs and Psychologists be required to conduct in-person evaluations since a tele-testing option is not available?
262. During therapy sessions, students often need physical cues or children need to be closer than 6 feet apart. Staff also have to be close to students to read or see their work. How will this be handled? This is especially important for students with IEPs.
263. There are students with IEPs that require teachers to provide seating close to the instructor and other non-socially distant methods of teaching. Will teachers follow this IEP or will those accommodations and modifications be rewritten before September?
264. Will sign language interpreters be required to wear masks? Facial expressions and mouth morphemes are a big part of ASL; some students rely on lip-reading to support their understanding of sign language.
265. Will all specialists/support staff still push-in? Will they push-in to multiple classrooms?
266. Will districts provide classrooms with amplification systems for hearing impaired students to hear their masked staff? What about hearing-impaired staff who rely on lip-reading and will have a hard time hearing both students/staff who are wearing masks? How can these staff be accommodated?
267. How will social distancing be put in place in autism classes where children are dependent on physical prompts and need constant physical guidance?
268. In autism classes it is expected that we toilet train students. Is this still expected even though handling bodily fluids is even more high risk?
269. In autism classes we operate on a 2:1 ratio where 1 teacher works with 2 students. It is impossible to implement social distancing in this set up. Will more staff be provided so each student can be 1:1?
270. If a paraprofessional (1:1) is considered high risk what modifications will be made for them to continue working in the building? Will staff be able to opt out of physical contact with children?

271. How will counselors address the mental health needs of our students in a safe and effective manner while practicing social distancing?
272. The description of cohorts in middle and high school suggest homogeneous grouping. What would this mean for students in an ICS setting? With the scenarios shared for groupings of 10-12 students, how many students with IEPs would be in a gen ed classroom, and will that mean they won't get the services of an ICS teacher?
273. What about special education self-contained students who are projected to be mainstreamed for 2-3 periods per day per their IEP in 20-21? It seems that would not be allowed per the guidelines as they would be changing classrooms and exposed to numerous students/teachers. Will the guidelines trump these students' needs for a least restrictive and appropriate educational setting?
274. Some students with disability can and will be able to wear masks if the teacher sets that expectation. Their behavior in school is often different from their behavior at home. If these students tell their parents they do not want to wear a mask, can the parent prohibit me from requiring them to do this?
275. What autonomy are teachers given to advocate for their students in special education classes? For example, many students with disabilities need strict routines to flourish, and may express their disregulation through physicality, such as punching, biting, spitting, etc. How can we protect them and their peers?
276. What is being done to prioritize ELs and classified students in terms of receiving instruction?

Specials and Extracurriculars

277. How can students be protected in band classes where wearing a mask prevents playing an instrument?
278. Will we be following guidelines provided by groups like EdTA (International Thespian Organization) for activities like theater and band?
279. How will music/choir classes run in school? We know that singing has been linked to super-spreader cases of Covid. Many students borrow instruments and share them during the school day. What guidance will be provided?
280. If students can't sing or play instruments, will curriculum be re-written to accommodate these changes? When will this happen? Will teachers be penalized on evaluations if they can't teach the curriculum due to restrictions from Coronavirus?
281. Can students share general music classroom instruments (drums, rhythm sticks, etc)? If so, will time be provided to disinfect these instruments between classes if these teachers end up on a cart because their classroom has been taken over to accommodate social distancing? Who is providing the disinfecting supplies? Many instruments can't use regular cleaners.
282. How will music teachers deal with students renting instruments from multiple suppliers and music stores for the upcoming school year. These suppliers distribute instruments throughout the state and service multiple districts.

283. How can students sing in choir when masks and social distancing are required? Will schools be forced to eliminate choir and choir positions?
284. How do art staff meet new core curriculum standards, if we are mobile and students supply their own materials? What if families don't purchase all supplies to meet our curriculum? Where and how will they store wet or unfinished art projects?
285. How will specials teachers be kept safe after a rotation of 100-150 kids daily?
286. What about teaching culinary arts? How can a group of 4-5 students social distance while cooking in small classroom kitchens? How do you make sure that all cooking equipment and cooking utensils are properly sanitized between each student touching them when working as a team? How can I go over and help them cook without getting closer than 6 feet?
287. The state recently passed a "bridge" year sports bill allowing students in the class of 2021 and 2022 to return to their high school to play sports the year after they graduate. High schools have raised safety concerns about this. Will coaches and trainers be responsible if a 19-year-old injures a 14-year-old in a full-contact game or practice?
288. The bill mentioned above also allows post-graduate students to participate in other high school extracurriculars. How will this be handled safely? Advisors are concerned about inappropriate relationships that may occur between 19-year-old men and women and the 14, 15, 16, and 17-year-old students who participate. What will the liability be for advisors?
289. What will Physical Education classes look like? Will state mandates be adjusted? Students are being encouraged to wear their gym clothes all day and that comes with hygiene issues. In addition, PE classes are some of the largest in the school and are usually made up of multiple grade levels. If students can't share equipment what will the class expectations be? If class is held outdoors what happens in bad weather? Will class sizes be implemented as there aren't any at this time for P.E.?
290. Will libraries in schools be closed, or should we implement a cap on the number of students able to enter at times like lunch and after school? Will we be required to disinfect any books that are returned? The virus can live on books for 72 hours - are we going to be provided ways to clean them or will we be storing them someplace for that time period. We also lend out headphones, computers and have computers used by kids constantly during the day. How will those be cleaned?
291. Who will provide the cleaning supplies, training, and complete the actual sanitization in libraries/media centers/makerspaces? If librarians/Media/Tech teachers will be sanitizing will we be provided additional time to complete this since many of us carry full teaching schedules as well?
292. What about Art staff-how do we share supplies? Even if we have to divide up the supplies we will need a bigger budget to ensure each child gets all supplies AND storage for each class/child's materials.
293. What about specialists who teach every child in the school or multiple schools? How can we safely teach hundreds of students each week?
294. Will school districts use evidence from scientific research to be sure music classrooms are safe environments for teachers and students? Should this study show

the need to further separate staff and students, will funds be provided to pay for all the necessary equipment? (ie plexiglass shields between each student).

295. If NJSIAA agrees to allow students to compete in sports, will athletes be mingling with students from other schools? How does this work when we are encouraged to keep students in cohorts that don't mix? Some schools travel to schools very far from town in order to compete.
296. Art is all about demonstration which often needs to be side by side or within close proximity to the students. How shall we handle this when we can't be within six feet?
297. How can we store artwork in between classes without it ever being somewhere another student could possibly touch?
298. Will schools host weekend SAT/ACT tests that are open to any interested student? ACT and the College Board are adding additional dates and pushing districts to open up for these tests despite the difficulty in social distancing and the fact that students sometimes take the tests in districts miles away from their own.
299. Many CTE classes include the use of shared machines and tools. Will students still be permitted to utlize these resources? If so, how will they be cleaned and by whom?
300. Will marching band be able to hold summer rehearsals since sports teams are allowed to begin practices in July? Does it make a difference if rehearsals can be held outside and with smaller groups of students?
301. How will the fall football season be affected (will there be games and how will it affect busing for away games? Will there be more funding for additional buses if students need to be spread out more on buses?) Will the band be able to participate if games are held?
302. Since students will not be allowed to change into their dance clothes, does this mean lessons need to be altered? For hygiene purposes, dance students always had to change into dancewear. Also, dancewear permits students to move without constrictions. Will the dance curriculum need to be changed all together?

Homeschooling Students

303. What happens when parents choose to home school their child(ren) and then enroll after the ASSA deadline?
304. Who will be responsible for catching students up if they return to school after being homeschooled?
305. Will families be able to move between homeschooling, remote learning, and in-person learning at any time?
306. Will there be additional oversight of homeschooling during this time?
307. Will districts supply families planning to homeschool temporarily (for the year/until there is a treatment plan) with educational requirements?

Remote Learning

308. As the guidelines make it clear a school may need to return to remote learning at any time will schools be required to provide prep time to teachers in order to prepare for this? What did in the spring was crisis schoolin cobbled together on the fly. Further remote learning will require training and time to rewrite curriculum and lessons.

309. Will there be an option for parents to continue remote learning (following the school academics)?
310. What training is being given to parents about how remote, flipped, or blended learning occurs?
311. Why isn't this time better spent learning how to improve virtual learning and giving the teachers the resources they need to create meaningful lessons online?
312. Will staff be provided more training for how to teach through Google Classroom using Google Docs, Google Quizzes, Google Slides, etc. and will students be provided training on how to access Google Classroom, how to type in a Google Doc, how to submit a Google Doc, how to upload a picture of their work, etc? I teach in a district that was paper-based since March because we did not have enough devices to make our district one-to-one. Students were using cell phones to access Google Classroom and Google Meet which was extremely difficult and challenging. staff and students received no training on how to use online platforms before schools closed.
313. Will the state make sure that each district is receiving enough funding to assure that each student will receive a device in September for online learning and be trained on how to use this device?
314. Will teachers be provided with the devices they need to adequately teach live during remote learning? Many teachers require a laptop and a tablet in order to teach while annotating texts, marking up documents, writing out math equations, etc. This past spring teachers purchased their own supplies.
315. If a teacher/staff initially opts into in-person learning, are they able to change their mind and work remotely? (not specific to high-risk). Same question for students.
316. Will teachers be required to have remote learning plans available to students at home, as well as prepare in-class lessons? When I get home from teaching in my classroom, do I spend the next few hours reviewing the work of my remote learners? Then do it all again the next day, and the next?
317. Will mandatory live instruction be required for students participating in virtual learning?
318. Will districts compensate teachers working remotely for their internet service? Some teachers had to increase their plans/speeds in order to video conference and keep up with work.
319. Similarly, will districts be required to provide teachers with separate phone services (either a work cell phone or a Google voice number) so teachers do not need to give out personal numbers and/or use personal equipment and data to contact parents?
320. What happens if a district requires live, asynchronous recording of lessons but there are student privacy concerns and/or opt-outs? Behavior concerns? What if the teacher does not feel comfortable being live recorded?
321. What happens if there are power outages or device malfunctions while teaching remotely? Will teachers be penalized for this?
322. If we are going to have some sort of hybrid (live streaming our classroom instruction), how will teachers be protected? Many teachers have major concerns about the potential for harassment, intimidation, and bullying. How can classroom community

and safe spaces be established if, essentially, any other student or family member can be watching/ recording?

PPE

323. If the school provides us with PPE will it be within the guidelines of OSHA/CDC or will we be using masks until they fall apart?
324. The governor wears a mask to his daily briefings but removes it to speak so that people can hear/understand him. He also has a microphone. Cloth masks make it very difficult to others to hear the speaker, an important part of teaching. Disposable masks must be replaced any time they get damp and they should not be removed and then pulled back up (like someone might do to help others hear/understand them). Teachers will likely need to replace their disposable masks multiple times per day. Will teachers have to supply their own masks like they often supply tissues, art supplies, classroom library books, etc?
325. The regulations for daycare indicate that staff should wear their hair pulled back. It also states that staff should wear an oversized shirt during activities that may place them in direct contact with secretions and change them if the secretion comes in contact with the clothing. Are such regulations in place for staff members who work with learners who cannot manage their saliva or other body fluids? Smocks should be considered required PPE and provided when necessary.
326. Will teacher and student dress codes still apply?
327. Will staff who choose to cover their hair for hygenic reasons be allowed to do so? Will students?
328. Will masks be regulated for printing/content as part of the dress code? What happens when a student is wearing an Inappropriate mask?
329. Will all staff and students be provided with the necessary PPE? What about masks for unprepared students?
330. Will we be provided with the necessary cleaning products?
331. Who is going to pay for all the PPE and cleaning supplies? I teach HS and imagine that when students leave a class the desks will have to be wiped down. I spend an enormous amount of money every year on tissues, paper, pens, pencils, etc. Can I require students to have all of that even if we are Title 1?
332. Will face shields be an acceptable face covering for students and staff?
333. Can a teacher who shares a room with other classes/staff require that all individuals who enter the room wear a face covering, even students in other sections/classes?
334. In the case of soiled masks from sneezing, coughing, etc. that may need to be replaced, will biohazard boxes be in each classroom so they can be disposed of properly?
335. When sports teams submit physicals, a district-hired doctor approves the forms. Will there be a form for students to complete if they are requesting no mask or if they are exposed and HAVE to stay home for distance learning? Will those documents be reviewed and approved by ONE district doctor to confirm the validity of the students health needs?

336. Districts have priced out masks and other PPE and found that it will cost millions of dollars to provide the necessary materials to open buildings. Will PPE take precedence over jobs? How will funds be allocated?
337. Who will supply replacement face shields, regulators, etc?

Cleaning

338. In many schools custodians have been outsourced to night time cleaning crews. In these schools who will be cleaning after multiple lunch periods? Who will clean computer keyboards? Toilets? Door handles?
339. Who will be responsible for cleaning shared materials and supplies like computers?
340. We are not allowed to use things like Lysol; we are only supposed to use the district approved cleaner (which doesn't seem to be on the list of cleaners that kills Covid) Will we be able to use every precaution in our classroom to clean surfaces including necessary cleaning agents?
341. Who will be monitoring the cleaning systems put into place to guarantee it is being done effectively? I have seen letters go out quite a few times about increased sanitizing and cleaning but it never really happened, just lip service. What recourse will we have if it is not actually being done and we are immune-compromised?
342. What about school organizations such as the PTO and fundraising? What will be allowed? Outside events? Gatherings? Sales? College visits? Armed forces recruiters?
343. How do you disinfect a large computer lab between class periods?
344. What if a teacher travels between different classrooms and has no control over the classroom setting from room to room?
345. Many classrooms utilize flexible seating like stools, yoga balls, etc. In some cases, these are used for behavioral reasons or as part of an IEP. Not all of these items can be easily wiped down. What will our responsibility be in these cases?
346. Many cleaning products and hand sanitizers appropriate for the virus contain fragrances that both students and staff may be allergic to. Given the large quantities in competing scents that are likely to be used, willt he state institute a fragrance free policy for all substances?
347. Most secondary students regularly use cell phones in class. Will UV sanitizers be allowed? Can teachers require all students to place their phones in a UV sanitizer upon entering instead of placing in a shoe organizer (as many MS/HS teachers do for classroom management)? Will the district provide phone sanitizers?
348. If rooms are not being properly cleaned and HVAC system filters not being changed, who do teachers report this to? What if your building administrator or district administrators are not responsive to these concerns? Will there wine state oversight?
349. Direct quote from the doc "Keep each child's belongings separated from others', and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas." Do their things need to be 6 feet apart? Will I be provided containers or bags for these items? How often are those containers or bags cleaned and/or replaced? Where will these be kept as I hardly have any room in my classroom as is?

350. Is it possible to have students be responsible for wiping down their own desks/materials when they enter a classroom? There are plenty of developed countries where students had responsibilities and expectations like this pre-Covid.

HVAC

351. Will HVAC/air quality specialists be brought into each and every building in NJ to assess the air quality and check for proper ventilation? Older schools are prone to air quality issues and Covid-19 is said to spread in poorly ventilated areas.
352. Will HVAC/air quality reports be shared with parents and staff?
353. Are filters being changed in HVAC systems at the appropriate times?
354. Will classroom doors remain open and how will that affect security (ie. Lockdown drills)?
355. Regarding ventilation: Will filters in ventilation systems be upgraded to the most advanced type for filtering particles? Will UV filters be installed in HVAC systems? How can staff be assured that maximum air exchange is occurring between outdoor and indoor air?

Social Distancing

356. How will lunches be served while maintaining social distancing?
357. How will students at the secondary level move through hallways?
358. How will the suggested staggered schedules work in middle and high school? Many classes include multiple grade levels so released classes at different times will make it impossible for instructors to teach without distractions.
359. How will schools implement social distancing with specials? Is it possible to keep specials on remote because of large class sizes and have the smaller classes go back? We can have up to 30 kids in one class, sometimes more.
360. Will there be additional teacher/staff lounges available so that adults can also be distanced while eating?
361. How will events like Back to School Night and parent-teacher conferences be handled?
362. If students eat lunch in classrooms for social distancing purposes how will food allergies be handled?
363. The state guidelines suggest using large rooms like cafeterias to help with social distancing. How can schools do this and serve breakfast/lunch? What if a school has a shared gym/cafeteria/multipurpose room that's already used for a variety of classes throughout the day?

Travel

364. Will students/families have to tell school personnel if they/members of their household have traveled to Covid hotspots?
365. Will the school calendar change to prevent travel time? Many families travel during extended breaks and long weekends. There were many families that traveled out of state during remote leaning, for example. Could we alter the calender to remove those

long weekends and add that time off to the December break so it is all in one and extends into January (like many colleges are doing)?

366. Will staff be permitted to travel? Will they have to inform the district if they plan to travel?
367. Will there be a way to monitor if families are quarantining vs. traveling/vacationing? There were families who vacationed during remote learning.

High-touch surfaces

368. Will we be required to bring work home to grade even if it could be contaminated? Most teachers have to grade at home because there isn't enough time in the day to complete it in school withing the time frame outlined by many administrators. Will parents, students, and administrators be informed that teachers will not be grading hard copies as quickly in order to allow papers to be quarantined?
369. Will teachers be required to collect and grade papers even if they might carry Covid? It makes more sense to collect as much work digitally as possible, but most schools are not 1:1 and many share computers among large groups of students.
370. Who is responsible for cleaning high touch surfaces in classrooms? This would include door handles, desks, chairs, supplies, manipulatives, calculators, computers, computer carts, tissue boxes, pump hand sanitizers, pencil sharpeners, etc.
371. Will staff lunch rooms be cleaned during the school day?
372. Will school/classroom phones be cleaned regularly? Will teachers be responsible for cleaning them?
373. Will districts beproviding disposable water bottles? Fountains are a high-touch area and would seem to be unsafe.

Preservice Teachers/Student Teachers

374. If a preservice teacher is exposed to COVID-19 while teaching will they be able to get tested through the district or will they have to find their own means to do so?
375. How will preservice teachers complete sections of edTPA that require student collaboration?
376. How will preservice and cooperating teachers maintain social distancing while working with each other?
377. If a preservice teacher is forced into quarantine due to exposure could it delay the completion of their program?
378. Will preservice teachers be encouraged to take sick days? Historically they risk losing credit if they have absences.

Gmail

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

DOE'S PLAN FOR REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Tom Shange <cbusad@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:09 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

- Tom Shange, Parent
- Agenda item: VI. Discussion Items, A. Presentation of DOE’s Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools
- Parent
- I don't think enough is being done to protect students and teachers....We are going against CDC recommendations of 6ft distancing in our classrooms. I don't think doctors will recommend this. DOE is recommending 3ft from each other
- Also there are no barriers/plexiglass/plastic between students and teachers...
- Reduced amount of people in a room is not being considered.
- Will school custodians actually sanitize high touch areas?
- Teachers are not being given PPE
- If we don't try our best to protect teachers and students we will have another quarantined year
- The measures in the plan are slim to none....98% of interactions in schools are between teachers and students yet nothing has been done to protect them are we are going against CDC best practices.
- Can we at least get each teacher a face shield and face mask at the bare minimum?

Gmail

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

Support student health!

Christian Silva <22.silva.christian@kkhs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Christian Silva. I am a student of the public schools here in Hawaii. I am writing to you to ask that you follow the 6' guidelines as well as require all people on the school campus to wear masks as stated in the MOU. "Six feet of social distancing" and the wearing of masks have been used commonly as a guide for people in Hawaii and our nation. Why is it that six feet is acceptable everywhere else but yet it is okay to work three feet in a school setting? This is not keeping myself, my friends, or the school staff safe. It also puts our communities at risk as we all know the schools are at the heart of our communities. We will all be at risk of becoming ill and or taking this dreadful illness back home to our loved ones. How is it safe when you yourselves, as the Board of Education, still meet virtually because of COVID 19? Please keep that in mind as you make your decisions and recommendations. I implore you to keep us safe.

Mahalo,

Chritstian Silva

Gmail

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

Testimony

Judith Hook <judi.haber@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:11 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 Judith Hook, I teach 5th grade at Kahului Elementary School in the Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui High Complex. I have 2 daughters one will be a 5th grader at Kahului Elementary School and a 7th grader at Maui Waena Intermediate School. I also have a 15 month old son and my mom who lives with us.

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 am very concerned of the recommendation of the policy about a 3 feet spacing for desks in classrooms after the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon "(6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meetings spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

As a parent, I've been speaking to my children about social distancing and how important it is to listen and follow the safety measures made by the CDC. What kind of an example are we making as parents, adults, educators, and leaders if we do not follow through on those guidelines made by health professionals?

Please reconsider the policy in Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021. Think about the risks that educators and students are already taking as schools reopen. Who will educate our KEIKI, the FUTURE of HAWAII, if our teachers begin to fall ill? Who will be the FUTURE of HAWAII, if our KEIKI become ill and live with the resulting conditions after fighting the virus? Please protect EDUCATORS, our KEIKI, and the FUTURE of HAWAII.

Mahalo,
Judith Hook

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jessica Ford <jessica.ford05@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:12 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing to testify on **Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening school for the 2020-2021 School Year.**

The idea that the Board would decide to place children **only** three feet apart in the classroom is incomprehensible. This does not follow the CDC's own guidelines which suggest that in **ALL** stores and other public places we remain **SIX** feet apart. To expect our keiki to sit so closely together, and not turn around to talk to their neighbor or lean across the aisle and speak with their friend is absolutely absurd.

I am 100% in favor of children returning to school. However the current suggestion puts all of us at risk. I know the damage Covid-19 can do. It is not something to take lightly. My father lost his life on Easter because of this pandemic. WHY are you putting us at greater risk than the CDC recommends? I am scared and deeply disheartened the Board would do this to us.

Respectfully,

Jessica Ford
First Grade Teacher
Pōmaika'i Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Amy Masaoka <amy.masaoka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:12 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.

According to best practices, social distancing of 6 feet and the wearing of a mask to avoid sharing germs is *absolutely needed*. Since the reopening of businesses, the number of active cases have sky-rocketed and continue to increase. Reopening the schools while "relaxing" the social distancing guidelines would no doubt increase the number of cases and this is unfortunate and unacceptable.

Shortly after the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) reached a contractual agreement on the reopening of schools with the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education (BOE), the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) released health and safety guidance that said spacing student seats three feet apart without masks was acceptable. This directly contradicts our agreement with the state and 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.”

I am alarmed that my employer, the DOE, would advocate lessening distance and limiting masks. I view it as negligent, at best, to allow staff and children to be exposed and to take that exposure home to families. Our keiki are amongst the poorest in the state. They come from multi-cultural backgrounds where many languages are spoken and effective communication is difficult. These factors influence how readily families can be notified about and respond to the increased risk.

While I do not have children of my own, I provide care for my parents, both of whom are in their mid-to-late 60s. I also help to provide care for my 88-year-old grandmother who lives with my parents. My grandmother and parents are at a higher risk of severe illness due to their age. Taking home this virus could be fatal for any of them. Placing me in a position where I would possibly have to quarantine from my family is stressful. The situation would also be extremely stressful if I were the one to become ill. My family would now have to find a way to financially support me as there is a possibility of being out of work for a prolonged time. Who is going to pay my mortgage and other bills? My sister is living in Florida where they have seen one of the highest rates of infection. She has two elementary school-aged children and schools have already said they will return to school in-person, despite a recent news release stating more than 7,000 children in Florida have tested positive. This is ridiculous and I have encouraged my sister not to send them back to school in-person.

I am outraged that there does not seem to be clear direction and it seems the safety of our students and ourselves are not being taken seriously. I urge you to take this testimony seriously, along with all other testimonies and reconsider the safety guidelines to reopen schools. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments. I am looking forward to your positive response in support of those relying on you.

Sincerely,

Amy Masaoka
Pahoa Elementary School
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

School Reopening

Anna Aoki <annyan83@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Aloha. I work at a charter school where classroom spaces are extremely limited. I feel that students need face to face education and I support that the requirement for student to student distancing being 3 feet apart.

Thank you,
Anna Aoki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Steph <steph_takashima@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Stephanie Takashima and I am a counselor at Kaiser 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 believe that schools cannot reopen safely without a mandatory 6 feet of social distancing between students, faculty and staff, especially if masks or PPE are not worn or mandated. With less than 6 feet apart, you jeopardize the health and safety of our medically fragile students, even those that don't have a medical condition, our faculty and staff who have children or families of their own. I have parents who are in their 70s that I visit 3-5 times per week to check in on them. I would not want to jeopardize their health and safety because schools cannot maintain safe conditions for their students or staff. This is essential that you take care of your own people. Without faculty and staff, you have no operating school to teach these young students.

I ask that you do what is right for all DOE workers.

Mahalo,

Stephanie Takashima

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kim Yamane <kim.yamane@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:19 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kim Yamane. I am a teacher at Waipahu 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**.

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 I am in support of the **memorandum of understanding** just signed by both the HSTA and the state which 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 whenever possible."**

So please do the right thing, as if YOUR family member's life was being jeopardized, as ours are. Putting teachers' and students' health at risk might force premature retirements, quitting, inconsistent attendance, etc; thereby, hurting progress in the right direction.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to testify in writing.

Sincerely,

Kim Yamane

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shirley Fusato <shirl4158@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Shirley Fusato
Educator at Ewa Makai Middle School
91-6291 Kapolei Pkwy
Ewa Beach, HI 96706
wk,ph# (808)687-9500
shirley.fusato@ewamakai.org

July 7, 2020
Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu HI 96804
(808) 586-3334
BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

To: Members of the Board of Education:

In keeping with your mission of "promoting excellence and equity in Hawaii's public schools and enabling all students to meet their own unique and varied potentials", I as an educator with the same goals in mind have to share a concern. Recently, the Department of Education has informed all schools that we will have students sit three feet (if side by side) or six feet (if facing) apart. How can we as educators "promote excellence and equity" if safety is not at the forefront of what we do as we educate. I have taught for over twenty years and have always taught my students to be safe by being hygienic and respectful of other people's space, especially when they are sick. Therefore, I am now having to go against all that I have believed best for my students and those they come into contact with by endangering their health, their family's health, other student's and school personal's health. My job as a teacher iis to advocate for what is best for my students, so I am asking you to take into consideration what is being asked of schools and mandate the six feet distance in classrooms. Th CDC has even stated that the six feet distance is the best indoor environment for our students and this should be the least possible distance. Furthermore, Dr. Fauci has just stated that the COVID droplets in the air can last longer than thought and can also travel farther than the six feet in enclosed areas. We will have students who will refuse to wear masks due to health conditions and others who feel it is their right not to wear one (parent supported), so with just three feet distance we are possibly looking at outbreaks in schools.

Additionally, not only are we endangering the lives of our students and their families (many live in homes with extended family, ex. grandparents) but school personnel and their families lives. Speaking for myself, I am one of those at risk and I also live with extended family members at risk, which means I may imperil all our health by teaching everyday. I understand we are in unprecedented times and face to face contact with my students is important to their education. I love having contact with my students and I know for many of them, I provide stability, support and love. So, I do want to be with my students, all I am asking is that all those in the position of making decisions about school and safety, keep in mind what is being asked of all the participants in education. Please consider our health first and make sound decisions to help all of us keep the pandemic down and support the CDC's recommendation of six feet distance.

Mahalo for your time,
Shirley Fusato

Gmail

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

6ft agreement

Lynne LeClaire <lynne_yk@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:22 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a 2nd grade teacher on the Windward side of Oahu. I am very upset that the DOE has back peddled on their agreement for 6ft distancing in the classroom. The MOU is a binding agreement and must be followed. All teachers need a safe classroom environment just as all public locations, banks, grocery stores, every public place, especially our classrooms.i will protest going into my classroom without these common sense guidelines.

The CDC guidelines states that safety is provided by 2 essential factors- 6ft social distancing & wearing a masks. Mrs Kishimoto needs to ensure that all DOE teachers have a safe teaching environment in the classroom!!! No excuses! No exceptions.

Thank you,
Lynne LeClaire

Sent from my iPhone

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 2020-2021

Malia Shimokawa, MD <drshimokawa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Dr. Malia Shimokawa and I am a pediatrician in private practice in Aiea. I would like to provide testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for 2020-2021.

I strongly urge your leaders to revise the mask policy. Students should be expected to wear masks indoors as much as is feasible.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has clearly stated their endorsement of mask-wearing indoors when possible in their "COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry" (Covid-19 planning considerations return to in-person education in schools) guidelines published 6/25/2020.

Some key points, which I also endorse as a pediatrician and parent:

- **Cloth face coverings protect others if the wearer is infected with SARS CoV-2 and is not aware.** Cloth masks may offer some level of protection for the wearer. Evidence continues to mount on the importance of universal face coverings in interrupting the spread of SARS-CoV-2.
- For elementary students, the following is endorsed as a "Higher-priority strategy": **Children should wear face coverings when harms (eg, increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction).**
- For secondary school, the following is endorsed as a "Higher-priority strategy": **Universal face coverings in middle and high schools when not able to maintain a 6-foot distance (students and adults).**
- 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. Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-feet spacing rule between students with the potential downside if remote learning is the only alternative.
- Children under 2 years and anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance should not wear cloth face coverings.

Even in the best scenario, it is not realistic to expect students and teachers to maintain a 6 foot distance at all times indoors and therefore mask wearing indoors should be the baseline. There will be also be accidental droplet spread with sneezing, coughing, even when we do our best to keep sick students home.

As a pediatrician, parents often will ask me if I recommend their children return to school. I strongly value in-person education and recognize the benefits of in-person school outweighing the risks of COVID in Hawaii as the disease burden stands right now. However, it will be very difficult to convince parents to send their children to school if they are not reassured that their peers and teachers are not wearing masks and therefore increasing risk of droplet spread. I believe in-person learning wearing a mask still offers significant benefit to each student and that a classroom full of mask-wearing students would not cause "an unhealthy anxiety for students" (as stated in the DOE version

If the plan is worded in a way to "strongly recommend cloth face coverings are worn by all as much as possible," this would still give the individual teacher discretion to make decisions that make sense for individual students and classrooms. But it would also set the expectation that mask-wearing indoors is the starting point, making it easier for teachers and parents to enforce.

I would feel more confident and comfortable endorsing a return to school if I can honestly tell my patients the Department/Board of Education is following the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC guidelines as best as they can. A crucial piece to this policy will be to require face masks indoors for everyone who can tolerate them. In my opinion, indoor mask-use is more important than outdoor mask-use.

Thank you for your dedication to our community and for your hard work during this very challenging time. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Malia Shimokawa, MD, FAAP
Pediatrics
Pearl City Medical Associates
98-1079 Moanalua Road Suite 555
Aiea, HI 96701
808.488.1943

Gmail

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

Reopening

Beth Matsuda <b.matsuda@seariders.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I am a teacher at Wai`anae High School. I am concerned about some things with the re-opening of our schools. The CDC and WHO both say that we should social distance 6 feet, but we are having only 3 feet between students if they are all facing forward. That means if a student behind them coughs or sneezes, they are put the student in front of them at risk as well as putting the whole class and teacher at risk. 3 feet apart is not recommended anywhere that I can find. If the DOE insists on only 3 feet distancing and not mandating masks (we can only suggest), a teacher becomes sick, will you cover it with work comp? How will contact tracing be done in the schools? We continually pound on how keiki comes first and they need a SAFE environment to learn. Are we truly offering a safe learning environment for the students?

One student getting sick puts 90+ other students at risk (they are changing classes, etc.) Is this really the safest way to re-open our schools or is it just the DOE's reaction to DeVos saying all schools must open. If a teacher becomes ill, will it be covered by work comp? Teachers have been self quarantining ourselves and only go out to buy essentials and then wear a mask. Can the DOE afford that much work comp? That much to pay in sick leave and sub pay? In the mean time the students are left with a sub (if one is available) and we have to write up lesson plans that aren't going to really educate our students (the subs are wonderful, but they don't know the content area to really get the students to delve deeper into the topic, so we can only write lesson plans that cover the surface).

If a student in one of our classes is identified sick, we all (teachers and students) need to quarantine, does that come off the teacher's sick leave (leaving the teacher with almost nothing) and the student is missing 2 weeks of school (which puts us back to virtual teaching). How are you going to do contact tracing? A teacher will a full schedule had 90+ students, so that's 90 students straight off that need to quarantine, then all the students that the first set of students exposed will need to quarantine. They go to their period 2 class, now a second set of students have been exposed. Then the second set will expose a third set when they change classes. Teachers talk to teach other, so we could be quarantining multiple teachers. The number of affected persons is going expand greatly. Hawai`i is experiencing a spike in COVID cases. Granted our numbers are not as high as Mainland cities, but we are asking for a spike by exposing students. Aug 1st, tourists come back and we can expect a spike in cases then also. The DOE is putting its students at high risk for COVID 19.

Are the students going to be exposed on the school bus? There is less than 3 feet distancing, so now we've exposed an entire bus. What do we do if a parent refuses to sent their child to school for fear of exposure (several students live with their grandparents who will really be in danger). What do we do with students with underlying medical students (several have asthma, so COVID 19 is even riskier for them). They can't breathe properly with a mask. What about the teachers who may have an underlying medical condition?

Who is going to be held accountable for the sterilizing of classrooms? The students can do it, but what if one students just wipes their desk once versus a student who spend 2 minutes carefully wiping down their desk and chair? Who is going to train the students and teachers to sterilize the room? Is there a written procedure? By contract, my understanding is that teachers can't be held accountable for cleaning their rooms. What if some teacher simply run out of time doing a lesson, who sterilizes then?

I feel there are multiple issues that the DOE must resolve by the time the school opens. Otherwise, we are opening the schools and then having to shut them down again. This is a HUGE disadvantage to our students. They will see the closing of the school as "vacation time" as they did previously.

I just hope that the DOE takes the teacher concerns seriously and give some serious thought as what we are doing when we re-open the schools.

Respectfully yours,

Beth Matsuda

Gmail

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

Testimony

Taylor Linck <taylor.linck@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
My name is Taylor Linck and I am a 5th grade teacher at Mililani Elementary School. This email is in regards to my testimony about what this upcoming school and my concerns.

Right now, we are expected to go back into the classroom and only distance 3 feet a part. If the CDC and every other place is advising and ushering us to distance ourselves 6 feet, then why is it not the same expectation in the classroom?

For the safety of the students, teachers, and families, I strongly request that the BOE will support a 6 foot distance to help maintain the well-being and health of our schools and communities.

~Taylor Linck

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

Testimony: Discussion Item VI(A)

Ren Chun <kaneoheren@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Ren Chun. I'm a kindergarten teacher at Kapunahala School. I'm in favor of "space seating/desk at least 6 feet apart."

I love teaching and I would do anything for my students. But I'm afraid/scared to teach again. I'm hoping the DOE will take preventive measures to alleviate any fear and stress that teachers hold in their hearts and minds about COVID-19. I would like the DOE to place social distancing guidelines: requiring students/adults to wear masks, be at least 6 feet apart (both outside and INSIDE the classroom, face shields given to anyone interacting with others, and plexiglass for teachers.

Please make school a safe and happy place for students and teachers.

Sincerely,
Ren Chun

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Hobbes Lee <hlee@mckinleyhs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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**

My name is Hobbes Lee and I am a classroom teacher at McKinley High School.

Although current scientific journals seem to have numerous disagreements on the average particle size of droplets and aerosols responsible for COVID-19 transmission (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7293495/), emerging studies are finding more about airborne transmission of COVID-19 (https://www.pnas.org/content/117/26/14857). Maintaining 3 feet of distance with a lot of students in one classroom for an extended time (90 minutes per period) poses a great threat to safety and health. Droplets that permeate through non-surgical facial coverings students wear may fall to the ground within 6 feet radius. Different scientists and different politicians may say or focus on different things. However, smaller water vapor will continue to fill the classroom for 90 minutes or throughout the day with or without sufficient ventilation. Without proven treatment nor vaccine, reopening the school with 3 feet apart seems to send an unspoken message that if you go to school, you need to be prepared for becoming sick or even die as people are still figuring out how COVID-19 spreads with no clear treatment in sight.

Yes. People need to take chances going to stores to buy food to survive. However, why should students and teachers put their lives on the line each day sitting close to each other to keep the schools opened? If students need to be supervised by teachers in an unsafe environment during the pandemic so their parents can work, then collect student information on which parents can't work at home and let these students attend school. If a school has many students whose parents can't work at home, provide more funds and support for such a school to make it fair.

Even before the pandemic, many students were mentally strained with academic and social challenges that they had to face at that time. Many students were placed in crowded classrooms with limited or lacking funds. Students need to be accepted based on who they are and their academic drive or proficiency. Students need to be getting the message that they are being cared for and their health and lives matter. During these difficult times, DOE needs to listen to students and ask if they will feel safe with 3 feet apart and that they would like to put their health and lives on the line to go to school everyday.

Before the school closed in March 2020, the school will keep the students' bathroom locked citing that some students are hanging around the bathroom area or vaping etc. Although each teacher gives the key to students to use the restroom, students keep losing the bathroom key and it takes months and years to get a replacement bathroom key. When there is no replacement key, students' can not use the restroom to wash hands. Students' bathrooms should be opened at all times during the school hours so they can wash hands frequently. Some teachers ask for one thing and the admin goes for it and that becomes an unfair culture within the school or department that is difficult to fix even if it endangers the health of students. Seeing more student bathrooms closed and locked, students may simply refuse to wash hands frequently.

Reflecting on DOE's mission, I understand that DOE's ultimate goal is to serve the community "by developing the academic achievement, character and social-emotional well-being of our students to the fullest potential. However, it seems that DOE is trying to serve the community at the expense of student's physical and emotional well being regardless of students being conscientious about it or not.

When more out-of-state visitors start arriving starting next month, CORVID-19 cases may rise sharply possibly to the level hospitals can not keep up. The state may slow the reopening process and schools may be run under a different plan with more social distancing.

I believe DOE can serve the community better by learning from other states that reopened without thorough consideration of the safety of people. Being influenced by politicians and scientists with special interest may not serve the community with equity and those in poor urban areas with limited resources may be harmed the most. My sincerest recommendation is not to push the students academically at this time, and not to push them to sit 3 feet apart. Give as much space as possible to shield away from the pathogens. Invest and practice more on online learning tools and equipment for current and future education. Provide more basic computer classes. After all, students and teachers are part of the community that DOE serves and our safety and lives matter.

Thank you,

Hobbes Lee

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Gmail

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

Testimony

kolohe_kea@hotmail.com <kolohe_kea@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:28 PM
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 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!
Kolokea K. Solatorio

Testimony from Middle School teacher

liat_bearden@yahoo.com <liat_bearden@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:29 PM
Reply-To: "liat_bearden@yahoo.com" <liat_bearden@yahoo.com>
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha. I am Liat Bearden and I am a 6th Grade Social Studies teacher at Waiakea Intermediate School. I am also the parent of a Waiakea High School student. I'm writing as both a teacher and a parent.

I know that it will be beneficial for us all to get back to school. The keiki need school and I personally miss school too. But I am concerned about the return to school. Right now, our island is fortunate that we have little virus floating around. But at some point the virus may get a foothold on our island and we won't know right away. As a school and a community we are taking recommended precautions and adults have gotten good at them. But, perhaps not so with the children. They are young and can be impulsive; they forget rules and precautions, I will be happy to consistently and calmly remind them. But I am realistic that the reopening of school will not go perfectly even with well-designed plans executed carefully. So, I worry when I read that our children may be only 3 feet apart in school.

I will turn 60 in October. I had pneumonia a few years ago; I feel somewhat vulnerable to COVID, but I don't worry too much because I believe my overall constitution is strong. My real apprehension is that I will pick up the virus from an asymptomatic student and carry it to my father. He is elderly, vulnerable and lives alone since Mom's death on March 17. I visit him most days to make sure his medications are measured out and he has a meal arranged for the evening. When school starts up I'd like to continue these daily checks, as Dad's house is a half-mile from the school. But when I consider that perhaps the children won't distance properly, I begin to fret. Having the children trained to be 6 feet apart consistently will really help.

In the national media, I've heard commentators proclaim that "most teachers are young" so reopening is just not a problem. I am not "young". I am happy to return to school, but I want the assurance that returning to school will be safe for me and my family.

Thank you for considering my testimony.
Liat Bearden
PO Box 142
Ninole, HI. 96773-0142

Gmail

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

Following CDC guidelines

Megan Mant <mmant@viking.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha to all,
It is extremely concerning that our teachers and students are not required to follow CDC guidelines. It seems that the DOE us putting our health in jeopardy. Are they willing to get sued if a teacher or student gets sick? Are they going to pay for the medical bills?
Please reconsider.
Thank you,
Mrs. Mant
High School Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Tammy Gamble <tamic59@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:31 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern:
My name is Tammy Gamble and I am a special education teacher at Baldwin High School in Maui. I am testifying on the the discussion item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan 2020-2021 school year.

It is imperative that the board mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks in order to keep students and staff safe.

I am high risk for Covid and must demand that safety come first.

Tammy Criscuolo Gamble, Ed.S.

Gmail

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

testimony

MB Ohana <tiari56b@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 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.The CDC recommends that schools "space seating/desks at least 6ft apart. Children should also be required to wear mask indoors for safety purposes.

My name is Maile Brandt and two of my children attend Sunset Beach Elementary School. I also have a child who attends Kahuku High and Intermediate School.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ayesha Genz <agenz@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I would like to testify on discussion item VI(A): presentation on DOE comprehensive plan for reopening shcolls in 2020-2021 school year. The CDC recommends 6 feet of distance between people (including seating/desks) and I am uncomfortable with the idea of going down to 3 feet of distance as long as everyone sits facing forward. This does not follow CDC guidelines and can potentially have disastrous results to our families and yours. Please pay attention to what is happening on the mainland due to local government's disregard of CDC guidelines. Also the new proposal of 3 feet was not agreed upon by HSTA and reeks of bad faith behaviour. I have two sons - one at Ha'aheo Elem and one at Hilo Inter, and I would hope that you would proceed with science as your guide (you do promote STEM as a priority at school - please practice what you preach) and not what is convenient in the short-term.

Mahalo,
Ayesha Genz

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Tess Lance <tesslance17@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:33 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

My name is Tess Valdez 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 Makawao Elementary School on Maui. I am also the parent of two children attending this same school. In January, we had our third baby, and found out soon after that she had a congenital heart defect. This placed her in the "high-risk" category once the pandemic broke out. For the past four months, my entire family has taken every precaution to protect ourselves/each other from this virus, especially seeing as a Covid diagnosis would likely be severe, if not fatal for our youngest child. As a teacher, and a mother, I am beyond concerned, I am absolutely terrified. I cannot believe that after months of staying home, wearing masks in public, not gathering in large crowds, that we would be asked to return to school with hundreds of people, in crowded spaces, where masks are NOT required seems ludicrous! I am absolutely devastated to be feeling as though I need to make the choice to either risk the health of my family to attend school, or forgo half of our family's income by taking this year off to keep my family safe. How can the DOE ask me to make such a choice? Do the right thing. Keep our keiki safe! Keep our teachers safe!

Gmail

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

Testimony

Landon <cuda316@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:33 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. This coming year will be my tenth year of teaching in the DOE.

I strongly support:

1) Mandatory mask usage inside of classrooms and
2) Mandate that the BOE makes HIDOE adhere to a 6ft distancing in classrooms.

It does not make sense to me that everywhere is still mandating a 6ft social distancing, but reduced to 3 ft in the classrooms. I know that it is not the intent, but to me it makes it LOOK like the health and safety of the community in public schools are undermined. Fortunately, our school classrooms are able to adhere to a 6ft social distancing but I speak also for the

Further, I believe masks or some type of covering over the nose and mouth does help prevent spread of germs. I speak not only as a teacher, but as a husband and father. Teachers put our families at home at potential risk to the spread of illness if our classrooms have students where masks are optional.

Thank you for your time and I hope my, my colleagues, and community members' voices stand together in this fight against illness in these unprecedented times.

Aloha,
Landon

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Carrie Jyo <carriejyo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing regarding 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 Carrie Jyo. I am a Special Education Teacher at Iliahi Elementary School in Wahiawa.

I have a daughter who will be a senior at Leilehua High School.

I strongly disagree with the 3ft distancing in the classroom. If everywhere else needs to follow the 6ft social distancing then why are we going to put the teachers and students at risk and say 3ft is okay?

I totally understand that students need to go back to school BUT....at what cost? This is NOT right! More and more people are getting the virus now, and if we are planning to open up schools on August 4th, then we need to do what is right!

With this said, I am asking the board to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Thank you,
Carrie Jyo

Gmail

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

Testimony in favor of 6 feet distancing and wearing masks

kaleko76 <kaleko76@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:35 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 Kalelani Ogata. I teach at Lincoln Elementary as a preschool special education teacher. I will start school at the end of July and am setting up my classroom to receive my students in August. I am starting early because I know the scope of work and planning it will take to rearrange my room to follow CDC and DOH guidelines to open up safely for teachers and students. I am doing my part. I need you to do yours. Please mandate that there be a 6 foot distance kept in the classrooms. This is only asking you to follow CDC and DOH guidelines. Every place I visit from the grocery store to restaurants all ask for people to maintain a 6 foot distance, not 3 feet. Mandating a 6 foot distance will also help to keep our classroom student count lower and thus safer. Imagine trying to socially distance 3 and 4 year olds. Imagine doing it with 3 feet...they are all up in your face. It will be a great challenge and only made greater unless you ensure all schools adhere to keeping a 6 foot distance in and out of class. Also, my staff and I will be wearing a mask and a face shield for everyone's safety. I believe in wearing a mask. I also believe that the younger kids will have a hard time adhering to it but if they see others doing it they will follow. Masks need to be mandated as well. Of course there are the exceptions for medical reasons or being too young which I understand but a shield would be better than nothing. It's worth doing to keep everyone safe. Please support teachers and keiki by ensuring schools are safe to return to with safety measures such as 6 feet distance and wearing masks are in place.

Thank you!
Kalelani Ogata

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy Note8.

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.

Ryan Yoshizawa <ryoshiza50@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing today to provide testimony on the Department of Education's (DOE) willingness to allow students in classrooms with only three feet of spacing between them and not requiring face coverings. First of all, this practice does not comply with CDC guidelines of six feet for social distancing and the use of face coverings in spaces where social distancing is difficult, especially in enclosed spaces with air-conditioning and/or poor ventilation. Second, many teachers fall into high-risk groups of individuals with underlying health conditions or are caregivers to an elderly adult(s).

To allow the Department of Education and the Superintendent to impose these COVID-19 guidelines for the reopening of schools is both reckless and negligent. Especially when we know aerosols in the air is probably the easiest way to spread COVID-19. This DOE policy to ignore six-feet distancing between students and not wearing masks is unconscionable and puts students, teachers, and school staff at unnecessary risk for contracting and spreading COVID-19. The Department of Health has chimed in stating that contact tracing in schools should not be difficult. But, shouldn't we be focused on prevention? Not on reaction after an incident occurs.

Please consider this: If you were asked to work in an unsafe environment, would you do it? Would you feel comfortable sending your child to school in this environment? Our family and loved ones are the most precious people in our lives. And it would be devastating to learn that despite following CDC guidelines in our personal lives, we exposed them to COVID-19 because we were forced to work for an employer that did not.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ryan Yoshizawa
Librarian
Waipahu High School
Leeward Oahu

Testimony

MayLynn Reis <maylynn_reis@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:37 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <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 for the 2020-21 School Year. I'm a 2nd grade teacher at Pohakea Elementary School and am gravely disheartened to learn that your released health and safety guidance states spacing students three feet apart without masks is acceptable. This directly contradicts HSTA's agreement with the state and goes against strong recommendations by the CDC.

All employers should ensure the safety and well-being of their employees and the population they service ... it's the right thing to do. Settling for lower standards of safety puts students, teachers, staff, and all members of their families at risk during this COVID19 pandemic as it breeds greater potential for catastrophic harm. We do not want to work in fear and we do not want to open our school doors only to have them shut again. Please err on the side of caution and require distancing of 6 feet to better ensure schools re-open safely and successfully.

Sincerely,
MayLynn Reis

Gmail

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

Require Masks

Christy Vien <christyvien@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am eager to get back to in person school, but I am nervous about safety. Cases are already on the rise and expect that they will continue s as travel opens up. To protect everyone, distancing and masks need to be required.

Kids move, so I don't know how 3 feet facing the same direction with be different than facing each other. It will be hard for everyone to keep distance at all times within a classroom, because of this masks should be required. I know it will be uncomfortable or annoying but it is worth it in order to prevent a breakout.

Christina Vien
Kealakehe elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Face masks & 3 ft distancing is not acceptable for safety of staff and Kekai

Stacy Julson <sjulsonteaches@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:39 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a special needs teacher, I honorable plea. Please reconsider making any adaptations to CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines. Our most vulnerable populations do not need to risk health and safety to appease any individuals who may believe they have insights contrary to medical community experts and professionals. Please do not approve against their standards of protection.

Mahalo,
Stacy Julson

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

reyes20mo@aol.com <reyes20mo@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:40 PM
Reply-To: reyes20mo@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Melissa and I am a counselor at Kalama Intermediate School. In regards to the reopening of schools, I am very uneasy with the idea of it as it is but more so now that 3ft apart is the proposal. This clearly goes against CDC guidelines, and with the increase in cases in the state along with the reopening of the state to tourists coming up, I think this creates a very unsafe work and learning environment for all. The reason why Hawaii has been able to stabalize numbers is because we have had closed borders to the mainland and the situation there is almost worse than when this first started, they are going backwards.

Please do not put us in the same situation and reconsider this option.

Thank you,

Melissa

Gmail

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

Fw: Testimony

Leina'ala Bishaw <nalaandcee@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:42 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

From: Leina'ala Bishaw
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 1:23 PM
To: BOE@boe.hawaii.gov <BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, my name is Leinaala Bishaw and I am writing to testify on the Discussion Item VI(
A): Presentation on Department of Educations comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. My first concern is the 3ft distance between students. CDC recommends wearing a mask, no more than 10 people in an area and 6ft social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Why would the DOE think it -would be ok to cut it back to 3ft distance. All it will take is for one student to have the COVID-19 and the whole classroom would be exposed as well as the whole campus. As a mother of four boys and two in elementary school I do not feel comfortable at all sending my kids back to school. Yes I already filled out the survey and put my concerns down, but I also feel like the new standards that DOE has come up with are not acceptable for our kids and our community.

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

Testimony

Alan Kim <alan_kim@kahaluu.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alan Kim and I am an Educational Assistant at Kahalu'u Elementary School in the Windward district. For the past 11 years I have learned many things from this job, but the one thing that will never change is to put the students first when it comes to education, to learn different ways to teach the children while making learning fun.

Being an Educational Assistant I have seen things that are not right. For example, I have experienced how the Educational Assistant does not get the respect that they deserve. I have been in meetings where I offered my suggestions and the teachers immediately laughed and shut it down. I feel that teachers and administrators don't listen to the Educational Assistants.

Another thing that concerns me is that the Educational Assistants doing recess duty, The guidelines is that when Educational Assistants cannot do recess duty without a certified person is there to monitor. This rarely happens and the Educational Assistants are usually left by themselves to watch the students at recess. We need to follow the guidelines.

Finally, why does it take long to get students the services they need. I've seen it take 4-6 months to get services for students that need them. I know that budget and personnel are an issue, but we need to do better in getting services for the students that need them.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. I believe that if we want to make education better, it is not about making the schools look good. But, it's about putting the children first and doing our best for the sake of the children.

Sincerely,

Alan Kim

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

Testimony

Susan Burch <susan.burch@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:43 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 Susan Burch and I am speaking as both a teacher and parent. I teach at Kaneohe Elementary School.

As a teacher, I believe that 6 feet, rather than 3 feet of separation between students is both safe and reasonable. This will be my 30th year of teaching and over these many years, I have developed sound classroom management skills. However, even the most experienced teacher cannot keep students in a classroom with more than 20 peers from turning, talking, and touching each other, especially when they are only 3 feet apart.

My son will be attending the University of Hawaii in the fall. UH will be placing desks 6 feet apart in their classrooms to protect the students who are adults and understand the importance of physical distancing. Adults are also capable of sitting for a longer period of time and maintain the 6 feet separation even when they are walking around the classroom. It will be a very different situation in an elementary school classroom. The teacher will need to constantly remind his/her young students to remain seated, face forward, and keep their hands to themselves. The teacher will need to carefully watch the students when they need to walk in the classroom and make sure they do not get close to another student. With this continual monitoring, when will the educator have time to teach?

It also troubles me that masks will not be required in the classroom. The CDC recommends that "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." I know that physical distancing will be difficult in the classroom. Therefore, masks should be a requirement for students and staff.

Sincerely,
Susan Burch

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

Testimony

Judy Waite <judyhula@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education members:

I am a sixth grade teacher at Kilauea Elementary School on Kauai. I am a National Board Certified Teacher, and have been teaching for 20 years. I am 64 years old, and will turn 65 in November. I have a heart condition, and so am at high risk of severe illness and death from Covid-19. I am scared.

I told my daughter back in May, “the DOE will take care of us teachers, and of the students. These are educated people; they will be super cautious.”

But no. I was shocked when I learned that not only will masks NOT be required (the word “should” is a loophole big enough for the Superferry to sail through), but the 6-foot distancing rule came with a loophole too: “where feasible.” With this wording, the DOE has set us teachers up for sacrifice.

Sixth grade students are a bit like kindergarteners. They have a hard time staying away from each other, and they all have a lot to say. And they say it loud! This is a great age for self-expression, but all that loud talking will help spread the Coronavirus if a student has it. I have a hard time getting my students to take their hats off in class; without a mandatory mask rule, the potential for an asymptomatic Covid-19 positive student to spread the disease is huge.

According to the World Health Organization, "especially in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, governments should encourage the general public to wear a **fabric mask.”** And Amy Price, PhD. senior research scientist at Stanford University, wrote “Trapping droplets with the mask means not nearly as many viral particles escape. So, when all parties in a gathering are wearing … masks, it provides an extra layer of safety for everyone… When an infected person is not wearing a mask, those particles can float through the air 30 feet or more and stay alive for up to 30 hours.” As a teacher at high risk of death from Covid-19, those are not acceptable working conditions.

As far as physical distancing, if you allow 6th grade students to sit closer than 6 feet, you will set the scene for viral spread. According to the CDC, “Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to **stay at least 6 feet away** from others when possible, even if you-or they-donut have any symptoms."

I love teaching children, but I don’t want to risk my life to do it. I hadn’t planned to retire for a few more years, but now I am seriously considering it. For the safety of my students and myself, I beg the BOE to overrule the decision to use the word “should” in regard to mask wearing, and replace it with the word “must.” I plead with you to be firm in the 6-foot distancing guidance, especially in the classroom. Every precaution should be taken to protect the health and safety of our students and teachers.

I appreciate your serious consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Judith L. Waite, NBCT
6th Grade Teacher
Kilauea School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jennifer Dempsey <jenniferndrake@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Dempsey. I'm a parent and a teacher. I implore you for the safety of our keiki and all the school staff to insist on 6 foot distance between student desks and also to require the implantation of masks for both students and teachers. As the virus numbers continue to grow, teachers need to feel that they are offering a safe environment for their students and also for themselves. 6 foot distance between desks is the only way to help ensure safety.

Thank you,

Jennifer Dempsey
Makawao, Maui, Hawai'i

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Masks in classrooms and 3 ft distancing

buffywhiteman@gmail.com <buffywhiteman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:46 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a grade 1 teacher!! I refuse to go back to school if students are only expected to social distance 3 ft apart when the CDC CLEARLY encourages 6 ft. I absolutely refuse to return to the classroom if masks are not required!! If Walmart enforces the mask and 6 ft distance why can't the DOE? I watch EVERY SINGLE YEAR colds, the flu, ukus spread like wildfire in my classroom. With our world in a pandemic why not do all we can to protect our keiki? I am baffled by the notion of 3 ft distancing!

Sincerely disappointed,
Buffy Whiteman

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Miyuki Sekimitsu <miyuki.sekimitsu@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:47 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 Miyuki Sekimitsu and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach third grade at Kane’ohe 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. During the regular school year, we consistently practice self-control and knowing yourself in order to keep others safe. Our younger elementary school keiki (and even older students) continue to need support in this area, as this takes time, practice, and awareness. I do NOT feel confident with every child’s ability to adhere to keeping a 6 ft distance at all times with little reminders, least of all 3 ft. We also know as teachers that students cannot focus and stay in the same place and same position for hours, so why are we being asked to expect this during these times? Asking our keiki to sit in what I believe is close proximity to others, with the idea that they will “face forward” for hours is unrealistic. Therefore, 3 ft distancing would ultimately put our students and other adults at risk.

When I am not a teacher, I spend a lot of time with my family, which includes a 95 year old grandma. As someone who comes into frequent contact with students and adults who’s safety and health is a)out of my control and b)not my business, I feel unsafe and uncomfortable with a 3ft distance between students. This ultimately increases our proximity to students and any management we would provide at that time, which ultimately will impact our personal life and relationships. I am an educator- this is my passion, and I would do anything for my students and their health and safety. But as a person with a family, I also deeply care about their well-being- my parents are also in the target age range. Therefore, being asked to weigh those decisions without being given the opportunity to join in the conversation about 3ft is disappointing and saddening. I feel strongly that my hands would be tied if I were asked to make that choice.

I am also very concerned with an “OPTIONAL” temperature check in. As we are not medical professionals, we will need to keep track of different symptoms as a whole school. We also know that there are many that do not show any signs as they are asymptomatic. We need to be able to rely on tools that will allow us, the adults responsible for our keiki, to make informed decisions about our class’s health and safety- I strongly believe that we should all be provided with thermometers or alternative tools that will allow us to check in on our students- with and without symptoms. I do not feel comfortable being in a classroom with students who “*probably*” don’t have COVID-19. I need to know that we are not endangering others.

During times where the future is unpredictable and filled with a lot of unknowns, I know that I am looking for a sense of safety and stability from our leadership. To be essentially mandating a 3ft distance with little to no teacher input at many of our schools does not provide that sense for me whatsoever- I implore leadership to listen to our teachers, who have always put their students and our community first (and are continuing to do so now because it is our purpose!). Please do not put all those who enter our schools and classrooms (students, adults) at risk.

Sincerely,

Miyuki Sekimitsu

--
Miyuki Sekimitsu
Third Grade Homeroom Teacher
Kane'ohe Elementary School

808-305-0000
www.sekimitsuscholars.com

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

Testimony

Raechelle Villanueva <rvillanueva@waialae.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am writing a testimony on the school reopening guidelines put out by the DOH and DOE. I strongly oppose allowing 3ft physical distancing and doing away with wearing masks in the classroom. I think the `ohana bubble is a facade. I see social media posts of school aged children in large gatherings, not practicing physical distancing. I do not trust it at all. I am seriously concerned for the health and safety for myself and my family. 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. In Texas and South Africa, we have seen staff contracting the virus at twice the rates of students. I am so scared of contracting COVID due to the irresponsibility of the families of the students I teach. I live with my mother who is in the at risk age group. I worry for her safety if I should contract COVID from school. 30 to 40 percent of our members are in high-risk categories. Advocating for social and physical distancing avoids the very real possibility of having to close all schools. For the health and safety of our keiki and our fellow teachers, please follow the CDC guidelines. I have never felt more anxious in my career as a teacher. I have thoughts of quitting if my safety is in jeopardy. Who will be left to teach? Put the health and safety of everyone first.

Mahalo,

Raechelle Villanueva | 3rd Grade Teacher
Wai'alae Elementary Public Charter School
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816
(808) 733-4880 ext. 246
http://waialae.edu



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

Testimony

stephanie kuniyoshi <stephkuni@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Stephanie Kuniyoshi, and I am a school librarian at Wahiawa Elementary, and have worked for the DOE for 28 years. 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 of distancing in a cramped, HOT/humid, small classroom will not be safe. Every where else in the state, such as Costco and restaurants, require at least 6 feet of social distancing.

From my observations of working at this year's summer learning hub, it is very difficult to keep the children separated, as they just naturally and innately want to be together. It is not safe for the teachers or students to require only 3 feet between the children.

Please help us with a resolution that will be as safe as possible for all.

Thank you very much!

Stephanie Kuniyoshi

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY; teacher concerns

Wendy Tomita <wendytomita@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:50 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I would like to add this testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening school plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Dear BOE,
I am a classroom teacher and am concerned for my students and their family, myself and co workers, immediate family, and my aging parents that I now need to take to the market and run errands for. With the number of cases increasing, how can you say that 3 feet distance is ok for my students and school? Students of all ages are not robots and only face one direction in a room. Are you able to sit in a room and only look in one direction? If we want our students to grow up being contributing members of society, shouldn't we be teaching them to show respect and give eye contact to the speaker. Yes, this can be practiced later when the situation improves, however as far as in my room, I would like my students to be contributing to discussion as well as helping to go over homework and seat work together with me while in class. If students will gain the most academically, face to face, then let's play it safe and allow them to turn their heads and share in the discussions.

Let's follow the CDC's recommended space seating/desks of at least 6 feet apart when feasible to reduce risk. We've worked so hard for the past 3-4 months, why not longer to be safe.

Thank you for allowing us to share our views.

Wendy Tomita
Teachers at Ali`iolani Elementary School
Parent of Moanalua High School

Gmail

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

MOU

Lynn Yoshizaki <yoshizakil@knights.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:51 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Please be sure the DOE follows the MOU they signed with HSTA.

A high school, where students walk around the entire campus, going from period to period, class to lunch, from crowded school bus to class, is really not a safe environment.

We are also being asked to have 15 students in a room, no matter the physical dimensions of the room, masks NOT required. Some classrooms are smaller than others. This doesn't even comply with guidelines from CDC.

High schools are NOT THE SAME as elementary schools.

LYnn Yoshizaki
HIgh risk group for COVID-19 because I'm old

--
Ms. Lynn E. Yoshizaki
Physics Teacher, Medical/Culinary Academy
E Ola Pono Coordinator, Medical Pathway

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lani Watanabe <lani1107@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm a teacher who will be 59 years old later this year. I'm concern about the 3ft distance and no mask requirements in our schools especially with our Covid cases rising everyday on Oahu. Please be in agreement with HSTA contract and be considerate of older teachers like me. Thank you! Lani Watanabe (Washington Middle School ELL math teacher).

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nohelani Kobayashi <nohelani.kobayashi@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Members of The Hawaii Board of Education,

In regards to the Discussion Item VI (A): Presentatino on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am writing to you as a mother of a son who will attend a DOE school, daughter, wife of anther DOE educator, and a teacher about your three feet between desks policy. The State of Hawaii has many guidelines from the CDC about how the virus can be spread up to 6 feet (maybe even more with new evidence.). We have many businesses and public places adhering to the 6 feet distance. Politicians and Board Members all conduct meetings virtually to limit the spread, because you feel that it would be safer to have the distance between people. All the Board of Education members have been working virtually and social distancing for others, because you know that's how to stop the spread of the disease.
So why would you not do the same for the children and the teachers? Why risk their health and safety, when you wouldn't do the same?
I love teaching and am excited to go back to school and see the students again, but not at the cost of putting myself and my family in danger. I have spaced my desks out three feet and with a class of 32 (16/16) it's still in very close proximity.
Then you take into account that masks are not mandatory/required. I understand the reasoning behind it, but now we are only distancing three feet with no masks. You can almost guarantee there will be many cases in schools. Possibly causing closures and shut downs again.
Shouldn't we be PROACTIVE and try to limit the spread of the disease by distancing 6 feet apart and requiring some type of face covering, whether it be masks or face shields?
You are asking students to sit in a classroom all day and not expect for them to want to socialize and work together. As a teacher, If I am helping students, I would be a lot closer than three feet from the students. Your decisions are putting the students, teachers, and all our families at risk.
Please reconsider your decisions on the plans for reopening of schools. Desks and students should distance 6 feet apart and face coverings (masks or face shields) should be worn at all times at school. The students and teachers deserve the same considerations as the rest of the state.

Nohelani Kobayashi
Lanakila Elementary School
(808) 587-4466

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

Testimony

Corina Calsing <cbcalsing@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:57 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.

I am excited to get back into the classroom and work with my kids as soon as it is safe. Distance learning did not work for the majority of my students.

However, the MOU agreed upon by the HSTA and DOE dated June 26, 2020 stated that six feet or two arms' length would be required between students. It also stated that teachers and students would be required to wear masks in meeting spaces (which should include classrooms). The comprehensive plan is in direct violation of the MOU, requiring only three feet and no masks in the classroom.

It is not safe to ask teachers and students to keep only three feet social distancing and to not wear masks in the classroom. Other districts have supplied desk shields and personal protective equipment for students and teachers. We have none of that.

From the discussion we had with our faculty, it basically sounds as if we are going to ensure that if one "cohort" of students and teachers contract COVID, at least they will all be isolated from the rest of the school. They have to wear masks outside the classroom, after all. This is unacceptable. "Sacrificing" a cohort is not okay. Every student and teacher should be protected with the social distancing suggested by the CDC, DOH, and our governor: six feet in stores, masks on. Why any different in the classroom?

We need six feet social distancing in classrooms. We need it mandated to wear masks in the classrooms. We need desk shields to protect students from each other. You need to be in compliance with the MOU.

Thank you for your time.

Corina Calsing
Kalaniana'ole Elementary and Intermediate School

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Report ebook piracy http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx

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

Testimony

joyce pien <joycepien@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

The purpose of this email it to provide testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. In an effort to provide the an optimal learning space for students and teachers to thrive, I kindly ask you to revise Discussion Item VI (A) and declare ruling to abide by the agreement between the HSTA and the States as stated in the MOU. "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."

As a library literacy teacher, I have the wonderful opportunity to enhance and guide student's love for literacy! Because I come into contact with 100+ students each working day, I become a highly potential bullseye target for the viral infection. Requiring and providing 6 feet of separation between the student and I will minimize the looming risk of student to student and student to teacher transmission of the virus. For the greater good, I am putting myself at risk by returning to work in the library. Therefore, I request the Board of Education to abide by the Discussion Item VI (A) agreement to keep my students and I as safe as possible. As educators are know for saying, this is a "do now" action.

Respectfully,
Mrs. Joyce Pien
Library Literacy Teacher
Palolo Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Curtis DeFeo <cdefeo4900@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 1:58 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I’m nervous with the recent spikes in Covid numbers. If this continues, I strongly feel that we should go all online.

Mahalo,

Curtis DeFeo

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Kaitie Miyashiro-Carvalho <k.miyashirocarvalho@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:01 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 for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Kaitlin Miyashiro-Carvalho and I am an educator at Highlands Intermediate School. I have severe asthma and do not feel safe and confident that the Department of Education is doing all that it should to ensure that all of us (students AND teachers) are safe! It is extremely concerning to me and many other students and faculty who are of high risk. Thank you.

Best,
Kaitlin Miyashiro-Carvalho

Gmail

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

Testimony regarding instructional distancing

Tammy Jones <tamibj.112963@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am saddened to hear that the Hawaii Board of Education is now considering reversing the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii and HSTA.

Under Social and Physical Distancing on Line 69 the agreement states that "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread. This effort includes reducing the 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, hallways, and exterior school grounds whenever possible;" Since we have yet to begin school, I can 't understand why you would already be changing the agreement when we haven't even seen if this will work. The CDC is also recommending "**students remain 6 feet apar**t and do not share objects".

I don't understand the reasoning behind not wanting to follow guidelines that are already established. Since this pandemic had begun, I have been very careful to follow the CDC, and state recommendations. I have sheltered in place, only leaving home for essentials. I wear a mask whenever I leave my home and maintain social distancing as much as possible. I am healthy with no underlying conditions. However I don't want to be exposed to the virus nor unintentionally expose others because I may be asymptomatic. I do not want to become ill and not provide instruction to my students.

As my employer I trust that you are concerned about my health as well the health of my students. I know that you do not want to close schools again. However, have you considered what will happen if students and staff become infected because only 3 feet of distance is maintained? Worse case scenario is that we have to close again because several people are infected. Once that happens it may be months before we are able to safely open our doors for face to face instruction.

We all want to provide the best learning experiences for our students but want to do it in a safe and healthy manner. Please consider what distancing practices you are doing to keep yourself and your family safe as you are determining what you will be requiring of schools.

Tammy Jones
Teacher/intervention specialist
Solomon Elementary School on Schofield Barracks

Gmail

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

Testimony 3 Ft!

Liza Buchter <20150944@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The CDC guidelines say 6 ft. Minimum PHYSICAL distancing and wear Masks for the safety of ALL - TEACHERS, STUDENT S which affect families and the community!

As Educators, we should be looking at all the research, data, and coming up with a SAFE approach.

Let's not rush into things to just open schools. this is the 21st Century. If you tie student performance to their grades, they find ways to do their will work remotely. It can be done!

Lets take an EDUCATED APPROACH, BE SAFE so we can lead the country in doing what leaders should do - LEAD APPROPRIATE to eliminate this pandemic, not Add To it!

Sincerely,
Liz Buchter

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

Testimony

Lynne Sueoka <lsueoka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Lynne Sueoka <lsueoka@gmail.com>

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 of Education Members,
I am writing to urge you to mandate that the DOE follow CDC guidelines and maintain six feet of distancing when/if students return to the classroom in August.

I am a grandparent of a school aged child and a 35-year veteran of the DOE, now retired. After all those years in the classroom, I can honestly say that students will not be able to maintain this "eyes front, body facing forward" posture for very long at all. Even the face masks and six feet of distancing will be hard to maintain, but the powers that be are willing to weaken the protocols even more?

Not only do these watered down protocols endanger our keiki and our educators and other school personnel, they also endanger the families of these students.

Both my husband and I have helped provide child care for my son's family since 2014. Now, we are both in our 70s, with other health issues (amyloidosis, prostate cancer, asthma). Both our son and daughter-in-law work full time and will definitely need some child care if schools opt for the "blended learning" model. Like most grandparents, we are dying to assist. And I have chosen that word carefully. Please maintain the CDC guidelines and don't make that statement a literal one.

Sincerely,
Lynne Sueoka, grandparent
Retired teacher, Moanalua High School

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.”

Carolina Cariaga-Camacho <carcam808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:02 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 Carolina Cariaga-Camacho and I am speaking as both a teacher, a parent of two public school teachers, and grandparent of two public school students. I teach at Pearl City Elementary and my grandchildren attend Hookele Elementary.

As a teacher, I strongly disagree with reopening schools with only a 3 feet distancing rule, no mandatory mask requirement, and no standard health screening before gaining entrance to campus by anyone, staff, students, parents, or volunteers. I have been teaching for 12 years and I can’t see how we can successfully keep our young keiki 3 feet distance from each other throughout the day. Do we expect students to stay seated at their desk all the time they are in class? Because of distancing, there will be no carpet time, circle time, and stations for activities. There will also be no paired or group activities because how can you do this with 3 feet or 6 feet distancing? We can’t even share supplies, equipment, tools, and manipulatives.

The CDC guidelines explain that the dangers of virus transmission increase in indoor settings. We see businesses, offices, colleges, all instituting a minimum 6 feet distancing and mask rules. Yet I am reading the DOE handbook that says 3 feet distance is sufficient, masks are not required, and screening is left to the individual schools to determine. Why in the world would the DOE consider such lax and dangerous guidelines and put our entire school community at risk?

I strongly urge the BOE to reverse the DOE’s position and require safety first for our keiki and our educators.

Sincerely,

Carolina Cariaga-Camacho

Gmail

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

Re-opening School

Jenny Wada <jwada124@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:04 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi all,

My name is Mike Wada, I am a Behavior Health Specialist at Kaunakakai Elementary School on Molokai. I have been with the DOE for 25 years or so. I am writing to you to state my feelings and concerns about opening school safely as possible so that we don't go the way of Florida, Arizona and other states experiencing surges in Corona19 cases and deaths.

Social distancing at school is necessary and three (3) feet between students in the classroom is not what is suggested by the CDC, it is rather six (6) feet. Why are we trying to stuff more bodies into an enclosed space like a classroom when we know that this is detrimental and would lead to more Covid19 cases being spread. What school principal would want to be on the Evening News having to explain an outbreak at their school/community. Lots of children live with older grandparents and could. bring this virus home with them. We should not even be talking about three (3) feet between desks in the classroom, when was the last time you saw a classroom in that kind of order? That's right, never. Kids move around, kids sneeze, kids don't always wash their hands well, and teachers have varying degrees of classroom management skills. Social distancing in classrooms should be as the CDS says, six (6) feet. That still leaves risk for transmission and infection. But as you say, we cannot stop all Covid19 cases from happening when we open up schools, but we can minimize them by following CDC guidelines.

And lastly, masks need to be worn by all, with very few exceptions. Not should be worn, but rather, Must be worn. There also needs to be plans to enforce the wearing of masks at the workplace place by all. Why is the wearing of masks mandated in certain hawaii counties, stores, airplanes, doctor's offices, banks etc. but not in school?

I can go on but I won't, these are the main concerns I have. I am hoping you take them into consideration and make good decisions/recommendations.

Mahalo,

Mike Wada

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Karen Kawahara <kawaharakaren@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a mother of a teenager who attends MHS, a teacher at AAES, and a caretaker of my 92 year old mother (who is paralized by a stroke), I urge the Board to require a 6 feet distance in our schools. This safety measure is practiced all around our country. Why is it okay for our students to be 3 feet apart?

Thank you,
Karen Kawahara

Gmail

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

Social distancing plan for reopening schools

Miller, Niko <nmiller@kiheicharter.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please rethink your choice of 3 ft between students and teachers. 6 Ft is a must. We have low numbers now but as soon as the 14 quarantine ends our numbers will spike higher than before. safety first please. We will get through this and it may take a few years, but please safety first.

--
Warmest Aloha,

Coach Niko-

Gmail

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

Testimony

sandy Fujioka <sandyfujioka12@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to you on behalf of Discussion VI (A) : Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Sandy Fujioka and I am a teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School. I am writing to you out of concern over the recent announcement regarding face masks not being mandatory as well as the 3 ft social distancing among students in the classroom. I am very concerned as this not only contradicts what our governor and mayor have been saying but it also goes against the recommendations of the CDC. With the number of cases rising in Hawaii, I think more than ever we should be taking every necessary precaution to ensure the safety and well being of school faculty, students, as well as family members that we will be in contact with. If we do not make masks mandatory and follow the 6 ft distancing rule, I am afraid that we are putting our entire community at risk. Please reconsider and do the right thing.

Thank you

Testimony

Rene Deese <rbaldera@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:04 PM
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 as a parent. I have inserted an image of the Middle School Models I was shown.

June 26, 2020

Middle School Models

Middle School Models	Social Distancing Addressed	180 Days of Instruction	Grades PK-2 on Campus full-time[1]	Vulnerable Students on campus full-time	Student Support Services available	Health and Sanitation addressed	Collective Bargaining consideration
	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Model A: Face-to-Face Learning Model • All students on campus daily (full-time) for face-to-face instruction. • Teacher would work with family to determine if student could work from home asynchronously.	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Model B: A/B Two-Day Rotation Learning Model • Face-to-face learning with online instruction that includes synchronous (occurring at the same, assigned times) and asynchronous (online tasks outside of scheduled class times may be completed at different times) learning along with projects and choice boards. • Students report to school twice a week. • Priority will be given to vulnerable students for daily face-to-face instruction to the greatest extent possible. • Teacher would work with family to determine if student could work from home asynchronously.	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Model C: Combination Rotation Learning Model • This model is similar to the Two-Day Rotation Model. • Schools determine the number of days in which students report to campus for face-to-face learning, such as once per week or five days over three weeks, depending on the school context. • Priority will be given to vulnerable students for daily face-to-face instruction to the greatest extent possible. • Teacher would work with family to determine if student could work from home asynchronously.	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y

My name is Rene Deese. My son's name is Elijah Deese. He will be attending King Intermediate for the first time. I am

absolutely opposed to Middle School Model A: Face to Face Instruction.

Model B and C are fair, but I would be more interested in a 100% distance learning option. At the end of 6th grade, my son met with his class at scheduled times. He completed assignments individually and as a part of a group with his classmates. I cannot express how thankful I was that his teacher, Mrs. Tomita, had everyone meeting over Webex. His classmates could still see each other. They joked. They had little scavenger hunt games that had them all running around their houses. Asynchronous schooling doesn't sound like it promotes interaction. My son is an only child. The reason I don't simply homeschool him is because he deserves to interact with people who don't need to look up half of what he says on Urban Dictionary. I want him to be able to see his classmates learn with him. I want him to be able to share his frustration, excitement, and views with them. This is the reason we send our children to school. The information we're giving them can easily be Googled. Human interaction is unique. During breaks, they would log off and play video games together. When my son's alarm would go off, he would tell everyone it was time to go back to class. This provided a level of normalcy that I think he would suffer from losing.

I understand that many families need the support offered by face to face schooling. The efforts being made on their behalf is something that fills me with pride in the people who work for our schools. Please give those of us who are able to make accommodations to keep our children home the opportunity to remove that burden from the school. I would prefer that my son not have to physically attend school at all, but since the requirement probably stems from having to check on his wellbeing then stagger the days children are told to come in. For example, Homeroom 1 could come in on Monday while Homeroom 2 could come in on Tuesday. If I remember correctly, Intermediate school had staggered courses anyway.

Holding classes outdoors might be another option. There are a couple of studies on Covid 19 spread and protests that suggest being outdoors and on the move kept contamination to a minimum. Hawaii schools are uniquely positioned to take better advantage of that theory than most other states. Obviously weather would be an issue, but it's something that could draw support from parents who are against things like conformity and vaccinations.

Thank you for your time,

Rene Deese

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lynnda Kaohu <lynndakaohu@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:06 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 school plan for 2020-2021 school year. My name is Lynnda Kaohu and I have grandchildren going to Maemae, Fern, and Moanalua. Please follow recommendations of CDC and space our loved ones 6feet apart to minimize their exposure.

Thank you,
Concern Grandmother, tax payer and voter

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Baker <mbaker@csumb.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

What happened to "Not returning to school until four weeks after the last reported Covid-19 case?"
We drop all of our concerns and become guinea pigs now?

testimony

craig casper <ccasper808@outlook.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:13 PM
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

To The Board of Education,

This is a real issue, IAW with the Hawaii Dept. of Health, a 6 feet between two individual is a requirement and a Maximum of 10 persons to a group. Discussion with one of the Educators I know said,” they would have between 25- 30 students in their classroom at a time.” How will this allow for social distancing with the 3 ft distance or 6 ft distance? I know from past experience with the classrooms in Hawaii, they are not that big to allow for maintaining the 25-30 students per classroom and maintaining a 3-6 foot distance at the same time. Over the past few years, the Dept of Education has been saying, Hawaii does not have enough Educators at this time to support smaller class sizes and over the past few years Schools have been closed for good because of the lack of money. Since there is going to be a 6 foot distance between students, this will allow for maybe a max of 15 students per classroom where do the other 10-15 students go? What will the policy on lunch rooms? Don’t most of the students share lunch rooms at the same time? How will the distancing be regulated there? With the issue of asymptomatic child or adult what is going to be the protocol for this? What is the protocol for students and teachers that have a weaken immune systems due to other health issues?

Craig Casper

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

testimony regarding the reopening of schools

Erin Thompson <thompsone@khswaverider.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This testimony concerns Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Dept of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a public school teacher at Kealakehe High School on the Big Island, and I am very worried about the reopening of school. I also help care for several family members that are elderly and immune-compromised.
I do not feel like the 3 ft distancing, the "classroom bubble" with no face masks, and the opening of our state to more freely flowing tourism on Aug. 1 create a safe workplace. Even 6 ft distancing and face masks are no guarantee of safety in the mass meeting and constant movement of having on-campus school.
I know it is a difficult balancing act the state is trying to perform, BUT the recent announcements do not make it seem like health/safety is the top priority. I see this crisis as a situation that threatens the lives of my family, my students, my community, and myself.
We are watching areas in the mainland that have not been careful enough plunge into terrible crisis with this virus. We can learn from their mistakes and spare our own community these avoidable tragedies by taking stronger precautions. I do not see the sense in sacrificing our children, kupuna, and ourselves in an on-campus school reopening Covid-19 experiment that data has already shown us will spread this deadly virus to our most vulnerable and cherished.
We have the technology and are developing the skills to move safely through these Covid-19 times with distance learning. Although I vastly prefer face-to-face education in normal environments, I know remote teaching can still continue our students' educations while SAVING LIVES.
I am strongly advocating for distance learning and more care given to safety.
Erin Thompson

Testimony

Erin Drayer <edrayer@msn.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:14 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern:
I have concerns with the DOE proposing to follow the DOH's guidelines, which indicate that students do not need to wear masks while in their classrooms. Particularly as a parent, the idea that they are a "cohort" or "bubble" while in their classroom or with their class seems ridiculous to me. If my child is exposed to all 20 of his classmates and then those students go home to their own families, that means my family (including my parents who are in the at-risk groups for severe symptoms for COVID-19) will then be exposed to ALL those people those 20 classmates have been exposed to. This does not feel safe for me or my family at all. In addition, the proposed 3 feet distancing also does not feel safe especially since it has been proven that the virus is more easily spread by people being indoors for more than 10 minutes. The students will be indoors for significantly longer periods of time than that. I would like to ask that you consider mandating face masks or face shields as well as a 6 foot distancing, especially indoors. I appreciate your time and consideration of this email.
Thank you,
Erin

Testimony

Charmaine Ahmed <charmainehnl@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:15 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am hereby testifying in regards to item VI(A). I am an educator at Central Middle School and would like to express my concern of distancing students only 3 feet apart. In order to ensure the safety of both students and staff members, a distance of 3 feet apart is unacceptable and will most definitely put everyone's health at a greater risk. A distance of 6 feet apart is already taking a great risk of contracting and spreading the COVID 19 virus. As education is of extreme importance and should remain a high priority during this time, we must not lose sight of the fact that no child's life is worth the risk of seating more students in the classroom at one time. There are other ways to educate children temporarily, but there is nothing temporary about fighting for one's life, spreading your illness to countless others, and possibly losing a life. Please reconsider this option as all of our lives depend on it.

Mahalo,
Charmaine Ahmed
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Annie Schultz <acm_schultz@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:16 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Good afternoon,

Please support my right to keep myself safe according to CDC guidelines. Please empower me to minimize my risk of exposure to the coronavirus by establishing district policy that requires the following:

1) All staff and students must wear face masks or shields at all times
2) All staff and students must maintain 6 feet of social distancing at all times
3) All classrooms must be properly ventilated
4) All surfaces must be properly cleaned after each use

Ann Schultz
8th Grade Math Teacher
Lokelani Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

roro watanabe <rorowats@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:16 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing to you as a teacher of first graders and as a teacher that falls into a high-risk category of being 50 and older. I am deeply concerned for the health and safety of all concerned as I teach in a population where there are many multigenerational families living and working together. With the current upswing in community spread, I along with my fellow colleagues, are extremely uneasy returning to the classrooms if the DOE doesn't mandate 6-foot distancing in our classrooms in accordance with CDC guidelines. Teachers understand the budget constraints with the state shutdown, however, we hope that more funds may be put into education as a way to get all of our students back to school for daily instruction. For our littlest learners, we realize that face to face instruction is the best model to adapt, however, as aforementioned, the priority is the health and safety of our students, their families, as well as my own family, above all else. We are all at risk and do not want to have to quarantine and/or shut down classrooms or schools should we have an outbreak.

Sincerely,
Robyne Watanabe
Kapalama Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

felix morgan <fmorgan3652@myhta.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Maya Terhune <mterhune@myhta.org>

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:17 PM

Hello, My name is Felix Morgan, and I am a 10th grade student at Hawaii Technology Academy.

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.

Although I completely agree with what is stated in the Guidance For Reopening Schools document, it seems to be quite a hassle for something that could be accomplished with simply virtual learning.

If we can social distance effectively in class, then learning would work. However, masks would make learning more difficult, especially if it involves large quantities of communication. Besides, a large portion of communication is facial expressions, which masks cover up.

If I were in control, I would keep it virtual until everything is back to normal.

Felix Morgan

10th grade, Kona Campus

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

Testimony

Christine McAngus <bluecolordiamond@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying V(ia):
I believe 6ft social distance is safe, reasonable, for all students, teachers, visitors, during school all school activity.
Even if it means for the safety of everyone, 10 students switch every day cycles. That means 30 students 3 times in a 5 day period. (off cycle on internet)
Thank you!
Christine McAngus
Concerned Mother, grandmother, great grandmother of teacher & students.

Testimony

Amy Kushiyama <misskoosh@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:18 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE Members,

My name is Amy Colmenares and I am a teacher at Highlands Intermediate School in Pearl City. My son will be a 7th grader at my school and my daughter will be a 5th grader at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School. My husband is a teacher at Highlands Intermediate School as well, so our entire family is affected firsthand by the decisions being made by the DOE. I am testifying in relation to the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

This coming year will be my 21st year in the profession, which means I started teaching the year the teachers had to go on strike, lived through Furlough Fridays and other pay cuts, and have grown accustomed to the constant advice and directives of people who have never walked in the shoes of a teacher. In some ways, the DOE presenting a haphazard plan to us less than month before we return to school just seems like more business as usual, but in fact it's a big slap in the face of those in my profession. Now, to hear that the DOE is walking back its own mandates, including the recommendation for mask wearing and the 6 foot social distancing directive, it becomes even more apparent that those in "high places" are not sensitive to the dangers they are putting us in. It's easy to say, "mask wearing optional" and "three feet is enough" when you aren't the one who will be in the classroom day to day, in harm's way, putting not only our own health at risk, but also that of our families (which for many teachers includes their parents because on our salary it's pretty difficult to not have some kind of multi-generational living happening). My 82 year old mom lives with us, and the thought of bringing home this deadly virus and passing it on to her is a real and terrifying fear.

Please use common sense and do what's right by all of us on the front lines. Not too long ago people were of the mindset that teachers were so precious and necessary and needed to be held up for what they do, and now we're the sacrificial lambs being sent out in a "may the odds be ever in your favor" type of way. We know that schools reopening on some level has to occur; we love our students and can't wait to be teaching them again. However, we do not feel respected or prioritized by the Superintendent's walking back of what she already agreed to. First it's masks and 6 feet, who knows what follows.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Blessings,
Amy Colmenares

Gmail

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

Compromised safety

Ethan Paraso <enhpar10@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:19 PM

Dears Sirs,

You are purposefully diminishing the safety distance as recommended by the CDC and thusly compromising teacher safety. And by NOT requiring student masks, you further compromise teacher safety. Requiring student masks is the greater preventative issue for me. Please close this Mask loophole because I will not feel safe enough to return to the thing I am destined to do. (Please note Band as the obvious and reasonable exception to my request.)

Let's make a low estimate of teachers that are elderly themselves and/or have immuno-compromised loved ones at home. Maybe 15% of 15,000. Why should 2,250 teachers risk the infection and return to work? You are directly endangering the lives of teachers and their loved ones with these lesser requirements. Exacerbating a teacher shortage.

I would gladly bare the risk of returning to teaching at 3 foot spacing, IF masks are clearly required for students at the middle and high school levels (with reasonable exceptions).

Please include a clause to allow teachers to choose to go to full-time distance teaching, if they deem that risk too great for a physical return to the classroom. Just as parents have the option for their child's school attendance, teachers should have the same option for the same reasons.

Close the mask loophole and I'll gladly take the risk of returning to the classroom.

Mahalo,
Mr. Ethan Paraso
Science Teacher, Moanalua High School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

6ft ONLY

Jason Agsalda <jason.agsalda@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

3’ apart is ludicrous and doesn’t take into account the health and wellness of each school community. We need to follow the CDC guidelines and be consistent with what we are expecting our state to conform to. The COVID cases are rising and when going back to school I don’t think we will be prepared to keep everyone safe especially if the recommended 6’ shrinks to 3’. We as educators need to be smarter and it starts with a safe environment for our keiki to learn! Honestly we should just go full online!

As a parent I’m concerned and we are considering not sending our kids to school because its just not going to be safe enough for them. Please consider making the change to 6’ feet apart and making sure it’s required for everyone to wear masks to help mitigate the spread of this virus. It’ll be a big change but it’s inevitable during this time! We need to be proactive and not reactive to ensure that learning can still occur with safety the main concern.

Sincerely,
Jason Agsalda

Sent from my iPhone
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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Open schools safely

Laureen Tonaki Coumas <laureen.tonaki_coumas@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE members,

As we near the opening of our schools next month, please ensure that the safety, health and welfare of our students and staff comes first. We cannot open and maintain our educational services without safety being the driving factor.

Guidelines: Please adhere to the CDC guidelines of social distancing, wearing masks and consistent, thorough hygiene. Desks should be **6 feet apart**, not 3 feet apart. Recent scientific data speaks of the virus hanging in the air, so facing all the desks in one direction, 3 feet apart, offers little protection for anyone. **Masks** should be worn **along with** the social distancing, not as an alternative to social distancing.

PPE: Schools should be given funds to provide teachers with face shields, masks, gloves, disinfectant cleaners and acrylic barriers to keep them safe. Classrooms should be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day. Teachers should not have to resort to obtaining these supplies on their own, competing with others, fighting for their own health and safety.

Testing: Students and staff should all be tested before school begins in order to step onto campus. Everyone needs to be screened daily and no-contact thermometers provided for every classroom. If we wait for visible signs of illness, many people could be infected in the meantime. Protocols should be clear about ill students and positive results of the virus. What happens when a school has a cluster of virus? What is the threshold?

This sounds like a lot but it is essential to give us a chance to teach and learn in a safe, healthy environment. Nobody should walk into a classroom afraid.

Thank you,
Laureen Tonaki-Coumas
Teacher

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

TESTIMONY FOR DISTANCING RULES

Lorea Cohen <lorea.cohen@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:20 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
This email is to encourage and implore the Board of Education of Hawaii to implement the 6 feet social distancing rules and guidelines within the classroom setting INSTEAD of the proposed 3 feet in earlier documentation last month that was released.

As a classroom teacher, I feel that this is the MINIMUM that we can do to ensure that the students take physical distancing SERIOUSLY on their own accord when present in the classroom and also as they enter into the hallways of their schools. If we are vigilant on our expectations and enforcing them across the board and across the state, there will not be confusion as to what is expected from students and staff.

Mahalo for your time. And thank you for what you are doing for our Keiki.

-Leah Cohen
Ewa Makai MS
--
Mrs. Lorea Leah Cohen
Polynesian Music & Band Director
Ewa Makai Middle School
91-6291 Kapolei Parkway
Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706
main- 808-687-9500

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

Testimony

Maile Yasui <maile_yasui@momilanies.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:20 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 Maile Yasui and I am a school teacher at Momilani Elementary school, Pearl City complex, Leeward District.

I am not comfortable with spacing student seats three feet apart without masks. This directly contradicts our agreement with the state and 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.” 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. This very thought scares me.

I have two Kupuna that live in my household - one of them has diabetes. I have also recently recovered from having pneumonia during the initial Covid-19 outbreak. So I am very uncomfortable with having students placed only 3 feet apart and also having the option of NOT wearing a mask.

Why is it that the UH college system will be spacing their students 6 feet apart and the elementary and secondary public school system can space their students 3 feet apart? Six feet distance is required at Costco and restaurants. Why would it be different for elementary and secondary public school students and teachers? The same rules that apply to our UH college system and public, should also be followed in our elementary and secondary public schools.

For the health and safety of ALL people, please keep to the 6 feet social distancing in our public schools. Please keep our students, teachers, and our families safe.

Mahalo!

Gmail

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

Testimony

Boreas v <boreasv@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I would like to share my thoughts 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 11th grade social studies at Kauai High School and I am concerned about the proposed policy allowing desks to be 3 feet apart. That's too close. The only reasonable approach is to follow the CDC guidelines and maintain a distance of 6 feet.

This is not about my health or any one person's health. It's about the health of the community. Schools must not become a vector for the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely
Boreas van Nouhuys, Teacher, Kauai High School

Gmail

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

Please consider strongly

Ross Miyose <ross.miyose@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:21 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE,

I strongly urge you to consider at least 6 feet of social distance between desks as a standard of operation moving forward to ensure the safety of the students, teachers, and our families as we continue to plan for a safe return to school. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Ross Miyose

Gmail

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

Testimony

Taryn K <tarynkk21@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:21 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 Taryn Tongg and I am a counselor at Moanalua High School. I am very concerned with the DOE's policy to have students 3 feet away from each other because I am currently pregnant. By the time school resumes in a month, I will be 8 months pregnant. As a first time mother, preparing for a child is stressful enough, and now I'm worried for both of our health with the current pandemic and DOE policy that was laid out. When I first found out I was pregnant, I was planning on returning to work in August for as long as possible until I gave birth in September, however, I'm now highly reconsidering that plan. There is still not enough information and research to know if pregnant women can transmit COVID to their babies, but I'm not about to take that chance to find out. Since the work from home order went into effect during the 4th quarter, I've taken it seriously. I only go out for essential activities (grocery shopping, doctor's appointments, etc.) and always make sure I wear a mask. I have socially distanced from friends and family for months and miss them dearly. As much as I would like for things to go back to "normal", it just can't. Our state's COVID numbers are quickly rising and I can see them rising even more with students only staying 3 feet apart from each other. That's barely arms-length. I don't even see how that's possible to enforce.

I am fortunate enough to have my own office but it's not very big. I would only be able to have 1 student in my office at a time with the CDC guidelines of 6 feet and that's if we were at opposite ends of the office. Moanalua is one of the larger schools on Oahu with about 2000 students. With only 4 counselors, that means I service about 500 students in my case load. There is potential for me to have contact with any of those 500 students on any given day and I don't want to risk it because students are 3 feet away from me and are not required to wear a mask while inside.

I am asking on many other educators' behalf that you highly reconsider the 3 feet policy for the safety and well-being of everyone returning to school next month. We are not worth the risk! We want to continue to provide education to our students to the best of our ability, but not at the cost of our health. Thank you for your time.

Taryn Tongg

Gmail

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

Testimony

miyazono@hawaii.rr.com <miyazono@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:21 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 well as other concerns that I have. My name is Kristen Miyazono and I am both an educator and a parent of a child that attends Waiakea High School on the Big Island of Hawaii.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that schools "space seating/desks 6 ft 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 3 foot policy after the HSTA came to an agreement on a 6 foot standard is disingenuous and violates the resolution passed by the BOE that claims the "health and safety of student 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 also would like for you to consider postponing the start date of the 2020-2021 school year until after Labor Day. Other states have done this to give schools, teachers, and staff more time to prepare to welcome students back in the fall. With the recent spike in active cases around our state, it is concerning to me to think that we will be allowing students to come together for a full day while allowing out-of-state travel and reopening our state at the same time. There really isn't enough staff or funds to be able to adequately disinfect high touch areas and classrooms on a regular basis, to ensure the safety of all. Parents rely on extended family members and grandparents to provide child care during work hours and students can easily become carriers of COVID-19 and bring it home to the ones who are the most at risk. I would like to ask that parents participate in a survey to see how they feel about the reopening of schools. How many parents will be keeping their children home despite all of these efforts? Can total distance learning for the first quarter also be an option? As a parent, I am concerned about sending my child to school knowing that social distancing and mask wearing will not be enforced but encouraged among students.

Thank you for your attention with the above concerns that I have about the reopening of schools. I understand that these are not easy decisions to make and I appreciate your efforts.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miyazono

Gmail

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

Testimony

Dawn Mashima <dawnmashima@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

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 am a first grade teacher at Kapalama Elem. School and I am concerned with the 3' distancing between my students' desks. Having taught lower elementary students for over 20 years, I can honestly say, children at the younger age WILL NOT face forward (one direction) for 5 hours. It's human nature to turn and talk/share with people who are situated around you. Even as adults, we converse with others who are sitting near us. Every piece of news or advertisement about "Covid 19 Safety" states 6' distancing. When I go to the markets, restaurants, banks, etc. there are signage and markings of 6' distancing. Why is it that enclosed classrooms that will house more than 15 students for more than 5 hours being enforced? We already know pre-covid, students come to school sick and our classrooms have always been filled with germs. Maybe only teachers know this because we see it each and every day. What happens when a student sneezes…according to the news, the "spray" can reach beyond 6 feet. If you're in a super market, that spray can spread over to the next aisle. I believe that's how our 6' guidance came about. Please consider enforcing a 6' distancing requirements.

Thanking you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Dawn Mashima

ps. it also worries me because I care for my 86 year old mother and my 88 year old father in law who resides in my household

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lauren Taketa <lmtaketa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:23 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

I hope this email finds you in good health and good spirits. My name is Lauren Abe and I am a Special Education Teacher from Honowai Elementary School. I am writing to you today concerning 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 worked with students with special needs for the past 6 years and it has been rewarding and life changing to teach this new generation of students. This past year I taught in a first grade grade classroom and they are full of energy, wonder, and curiosity. At this young age the students are learning many basic foundational skills. The students are learning to play with one another, share toys with each other, learn new social skills with one another, learning how to read, cut out shapes, and learn good personal hygiene skills. Also at this young age they are learning to stay in their own personal space when appropriate. Now with the COVID-19 virus I am asking you to consider the safest learning environment for the students in our school and the State of Hawaii. Being 6 feet apart would provide the greatest amount of safety for our students. It would be the safest way to help our younger students to remain at a safe distance from their peers. The student desks that are 6 feet apart would also be physical guides that would help the teachers to teach the students how to remain a safe distance away from each other. I hope you will consider the CDC's recommendation for the 6ft distance between each student desk.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. This has been a difficult and challenging time. Thank you for all that you are doing. Please take care and stay safe.

Sincerely,
Lauren Abe

Gmail

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

Please Mandate 6 feet distancing

Kerri Ayabe <kerri.ayabe@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher, I ask that you please mandate a 6' distancing between student desks. According to the agreement with the state of Hawaii and HSTA, 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." Please keep our students & us teachers safe by following CDC guidelines - "The CDC states, "**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)." Disregarding these CDC guidelines are putting our students & our staff at greater risk. Please help to keep us as safe as possible so we can do our jobs by staying healthy.

Kerri Ayabe
Grade 1 Teacher
Helemano Elementary School



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Testimony; Discussion Item VI (A); School year 2020

Gerald Garcia <gerald@hawaiidocumentservice.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

7/7/2020
Board Members:
I am opposed to opening of schools for in-school attendance in Fall 2020.
1. There is no vaccine or proven treatment.
2. Students who show no signs can quickly spread the virus among other students and teachers.
3. Many students live with grandparents or with parents who have compromised health. Illness will spread.
4. Many teachers also have compromised health issues.
5. We have seen what is happening around the country when people go to restaurants, bars and
congregate in rooms. This is much like a school setting. The virus is spiking all over the country.
Hospitals are filling. People are dying. Mayors and Governors are closing establishments where people gather.
6. You cannot keep children away from each other.
7. So many of the new cases are travel related and Hawaii plans to open up air travel. This is a bad combination for a deadly crisis.
8. You have a legal and moral obligation to keep staff and students, and their families safe.
9. Please do not open the schools this year.
Thank you.
Gerald Garcia, Holualoa, Kona, Big Island

--
Note: we have a new Suite Number: "108", because we moved downstairs in the same building.
Gerald A. Garcia, Attorney at Law
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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

6 Feet Distancing

Clifford <togoc001@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Not sure why 3 feet is being proposed when everything published is 6 feet distancing. Dangerous for students, staff, faculty and families.

Cliff

Gmail

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

School Reopening

Jj Perez <islandofknowledge@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:27 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Hawaii Board of Education:

It has been recently announced that the HIBOE is planning to reopen schools, and considering social distancing in the classroom with only 3 feet between desks. This is even in light of recommendations by the CDC that social distancing be at least 6 feet between individuals. As a reminder to you, many children and adults who occupy school settings, have underlying medical conditions and immune deficiencies, which put them at risk for contracting viruses. Additionally, many who spread the virus are asymptomatic, and this includes high numbers in younger age groups. There are still too many unknowns yet, about how this virus actually spreads, and many parents and those who work in the education system **do not agree** that the HDOE, and the BOE, should place ANY Hawaii citizens in the position of guinea pig. As anybody who knows anything about schools will agree to, schools and classrooms are large laboratories/petri dishes for propagating and spreading germs and viruses. Do you, individual HI Board of Education members really want your legacy to be one of inflicting harm, or worse yet, death on even one child, or adult? Please consider this carefully, even if it means delaying the reopening of schools. It is the prudent thing to do!

Sincerely,

Concerned parent, and educator

Gmail

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

6'

MD Thomas <mdonell.thomas@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:27 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please follow the 6' guidelines for distancing students in school.
The health of our children, teachers, families ...the state depends on it.
Mahalo,
Maria Thomas

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel <20250409@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:28 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**

Name: Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel
School: Wai`anae High School

Dear Board Members,

Understanding that COVID-19 has placed significant obstacles in place to reopen schools I humbly ask that we take extra precautions when planning to re-open. As an educator, I hold education and the ability to receive an education with such high regard. As much as I miss my students and wish for them to return to normalcy we have to do so with their well-being being our number one priority. The proposed comprehensive plan for reopening schools overlooks many CDC guidelines. I am afraid of returning to such an unsteady work environment with such incautious procedures. Please hold all stakeholders accountable and protect our students, our teachers, and our families.

Respectfully,

Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel
Wai`anae High School
English Language Arts | French Language

> “Toutes les grandes personnes ont d'abord été des enfants mais peu d'entre elles s'en souviennent."
> “All grown-ups were once children... but only few of them remember it.”
> - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince

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

testimony re school reopening guidelines

Bonnie Lum <mauilum@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:28 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: Bonita Lum
Worksite: Makawao Elementary School
The CDC has stated 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.”
However, you have chosen to ignore the Science and allow 3 ft separation of students. This is how many students were situated before Covid.
I am in the high risk group as is my spouse. I feel very uncomfortable returning to school under your guidelines. I am seriously considering retiring as it is not worth it to risk my health.
I do want to continue teaching. Please reconsider your guidelines to reflect the CDC recommendation of 6 ft. separation of students and staff AND the mandatory use of face masks.
Mahalo for your time.
Regards,
Bonnie
Bonita Lum

Gmail

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

Guidelines for Opening the Schools

caugrl@aol.com <caugrl@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,
The CDC recommendation is for people to use face masks and to maintain at least six feet of distance to reduce the chances of spreading Covid 19. Yet, the BOE would like to relax the rules? Why? Not following the recommendations of the CDC would most likely lead to an increase in viral cases and very likely deaths.
If the BOE relaxes the CDC recommendations then the BOE is assuming liability. If students and teachers get sick, have permanent disability and/or die from Covid 19, then expect to start having to have extra funds going towards payouts for injuries or deaths from catching Covid 19.
I've never sued anyone in my life, but if my kids come home with the virus or if I come home with the virus, expect that I will sue. I'm sure I'm not the only one who would sue. You absolutely cannot reduce the social distancing requirements given by the CDC!
I am not just a teacher who has a tendency to have breathing issues, but I am also a daughter and a parent. As a teacher, I have already lost former students to death. It is an immensely devastating experience. Young lives cut short is such a tragedy not only for the young person, their family and friends, but also for the community. I don't want to experience the pain of losing another student. If a student were to die because they were exposed to the virus in my classroom because the Board doesn't require CDC guidelines I don't think I could continue working as a teacher. I worry also that my students will bring home the virus to their families. I also worry about my own health. Even survivors of this disease are having permanent damage to their lungs and other organs. As a daughter, I worry that I will bring this home to my elderly parents. With teacher pay in Hawaii being the lowest in the nation when considering the cost of living, I have to live with my parents. I worry my kids will bring it home to their grandparents. I can't imagine the guilt we (my children and I) would have if we brought the virus home and it killed my parents. Not to mention, as a mother I worry about how kids in the mainland have died from this virus and how some kids now have permanent organ damage.
I empathize with the Board in having to open schools and having to deal with this pandemic. However, I cannot stand quietly by and allow the Board to make such reckless decisions to go against the scientific evidence that we currently know. The Board absolutely must require students to wear a mask. If a student has a medical reason for not being able to wear a mask, then the student should be participating only with distance learning. If the student is not healthy enough to be able to wear a mask, then they are most likely at high risk of having a bad outcome if they do catch the virus. I absolutely will not allow an unmasked student into my classroom in the middle of a pandemic. To allow this would be reckless behavior and against the expectations of my job as a teacher to protect my students.
Furthermore, I have been out shopping for food and I've noticed that adults are terrible at social distancing. Kids don't seem to understand the concept either. So, it is essential that kids wear masks and that part of this year's curriculum is to show students what six feet social distancing looks like and train them to use it. It would be irresponsible for the BOE to set the distancing example at three feet and then expect students to automatically use six feet in the playground and in the larger community.
The Board expects teachers to lead by example. As a teacher, I expect the Board of Education to do the same. Lead by example and require the use of masks and to maintain at least six feet of social distancing.

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Testimony

Mary S. <lokelani86@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am provided 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 Mary Shire and I am a National Board Certified English teacher at Aiea Intermediate School on Oahu. I have taught at this school for twelve years. I am writing because I am concerned about the disconnect from reality the Department of Education‘s reopening plan seems to have with what is occurring in our world as well as what was agreed upon in the MOU with HSTA. **I strongly feel that we must maintain at least 6 feet distancing between students and staff and that maks or face shields must be worn by all.**

I appreciate that the BOE was able to quickly come to many agreements with HSTA regarding the opening of the school year, but the lack of a concrete mask requirement and the issue of distancing are of vital importance.

My school is a Title 1 school that services several public housing areas as well as many English Language Learner students. I know firsthand how important it is for my students to be able to attend school and take advantage of not just what they learn in class, but the many services the school provides. I also know that many of my students live in multi-generational houses and many deal with asthma or have other family members with chronic health conditions. Also, even in the middle school level students often have a hard time keeping their hands away from each other, they borrow pencils, water bottles, play around, etc. As a result there must be very strong rules in place to keep students far away from each other as well as ensure they are wearing masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to their classmates, families and teachers.

Although there have been studies to show that COVID may have less impact on students they can still carry the disease to their family members or pass onto teachers. As a middle school teacher I see 100+ students a day, so it is hard to maintain any sort of "bubble" for protection. Although I am a relatively healthy 34 year old, I do live with my parents who are both over 65 and one has several chronic conditions that are well maintained, yet put her more at risk for COVID. I should not have to sacrifice my health or the health of my family in order to do my job when there are simple ways to keep us safe.

I also hope the BOE is continuing to watch the increasing case counts and will determine whether or not to even start in person school if cases continue to rise.

Thank you for your consideration.
Mary Shire

Gmail

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

Testimony

Noel Hakoda <nhakoda@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Noel Hakoda and I work at Campbell 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 US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that schools space seating 6 feet apart, which is incongruent with the plan to allow students to be 3 feet apart in classrooms. I am concerned about the health and safety of the students and families I serve as well as that of my fellow educators. I myself have been identified to have respiratory health issues and have family members who are very susceptible to infection. The plan to reopen for school year 2020-2021 must be reconsidered.

With the recent influx in infection rate, I feel that it is vital to revisit the re-opening plans and consider an option that emphasizes more social distancing and preventing students from coming to campus as much as possible. We should focus our efforts on trying to build a plan that will support a distance learning environment for all of our students at this time due to the unpredictable nature of this pandemic.

I care deeply for the future of our keiki--we must remember that the health and safety or our community is paramount if we want to prioritize and emphasize education.

Mahalo,
Noel Hakoda, EdD

Gmail

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

Testimony

Tricia Ross Lundin <tricia.lundin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:33 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2020/07/07/hawaii-sees-new-covid-cases-highest-single-day-increase-ever/

Good afternoon,
My name is Tricia Lundin and I currently teach 8th grade science at Kailua Intermediate. Last year, I taught approximately 140 students at any one given time. This year enrollment for our one middle school is lookin to be around 800 students which means my roster will be at or above last years.
If you consider this, I will not only be in contact with 140 students each day/week, but also whim ever they live with and who those families associate with on a daily basis. For example, if 100 of my students come from homes with two parents/guardians and at least one sibling, I am now in contact with over 140 students plus 300 family members, not even counting who those family members are in contact with each day. If you consider each parent works with at least one other person and that each sibling in in a class with at least 10 other students, I am now in contact with over 140 students, 300 family members and 1,000 other student from the sibling's contacts, and over 2,000 other adults from the parent's contacts.
I have a family of my own. I am a mother of three, wife and daughter. My family (ohana) is my priority. My children do not deserve to be exposed to this horrible disease unnecessarily. They do not deserve to lose a mother who caught this disease simply because our state is trying to squish as many student into one classroom as possible due to budget issues and political pressures. We are not glorified baby sitters! Let me say that louder for the people in the back! We are not baby sitters for working families! We are college educated professionals who deserve better than that! We are here to teach and educate your children. This can be done in person, online and with a combination of both. We do not need to risk their safety, or mine. Colleges are requiring 6 foot safety distance, why are those individual student's and instructor's lives valued higher than ours?
Teenagers in our middle schools are not prepared to handle being in classrooms only 3 feet from peers. Last year, students frequently shared supplies as families sometimes could not provide them. I often provided large baskets of supplies at each table to share so their needs were taken care of. However this year, I cannot have them sharing supplies. Each student and family will need to provide their child with supplies. Last year specifically, being in classrooms with no air conditioning, sharing water between students (although discouraged by faculty) was something that was very common. It will be hard enough during lunch and recess to remind them they cannot hug their friend, share food/water, cellphones, candy, pencils, etc. let alone in class when we are so close it becomes easier to lean over and talk or touch one another. What about those who cannot wear masks due to breathing issues or panic attacks? These students are now closer in proximity than advised, and without the protection of a mask.
Having a 6 foot of distance reminds individuals that there is still a harmful disease currently happening and reminds them to take precaution not touching their face or belongings unnecessarily until they've washed their hands. The closer that you put them and the more restrictions that you lift from them (masks), the more complacent one becomes. There is a false sense of security that will fall into place increasing the behaviors that we are trying to avoid (unnecessary socializing and human contact), therefore putting students teachers and families at greater risk for picking up the disease from contact at school or bringing it to school and passing it around. Today our state had 41 new cases! Let me repeat that...41! This is without the mixing of students at school. This is only with small distanced openings of gyms, restaurants and some stores. Can you imagine what our numbers will be when we have hundred of children at hundreds of schools interacting with relax guidelines? It is the perfect storm. Numbers will skyrocket and schools will be shit down again.
The minute you risk the health of others, the more families will withdraw their children from school to homeschool and you will lose funding and registration. Our lives are more valuable than convenience. Parents know this. They are willing to put their children first. I only wish that you could say the same.

Please consider the recommended guidelines of 6 feet.
Please consider installing hand sanitizer pumps in each room.
Please consider masks/face shields.
Please consider air conditioning units for as many classes as possible so students don't feel like they are suffocating in the heat with a mask on.

Our students deserve the best, and so do our teachers.

Gmail

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

I’m a Teacher...Listen Up

Jo Ortiz <jodi.ebesuortiz@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi!
I’ve been a teacher for the last 10years for the DOE. I’ve never witnessed such poor leadership from you all since our state of Hawaii had to go through this covid crisis.

Families and faculty are anxious already knowing covid cases has risen and communities are showing more cases that are spreading. CDC has placed specific guidelines in place to ensure everyone’s safety. By not following the mandates of mask and staying 6ft away and possibly even keeping the rule of being 4weeks covid free until school opens adds to the life threatening fear for all families and staff. You put so many teachers at risk considering majority of Teachers are high risk in age and health.

This lack of protection and mandate
Shows everyone that you do not care about their well being . Most of these teachers as well go home to their elderly families and care for them. And lots of these kids also have grandparents raising
them. So you don’t only put the kids at risk but their whole family as well. Where your going with this is horrible and makes no sense and no safety for any one of us. Not only are you considering using pay cuts on us but now you are allowing our lives to be at stake with our jobs.
Take care of your teachers....Since we take care of everyone’s Keiki here in the state of Hawaii.

Another thing..
No temperature checks before coming on to school? Do you realize that a lot of kids
Are given medicine prior to coming to school when sick so they don’t have to stay home? Do You realize that I’ve witnessed kids Innocently sneezing
And coughing all over their friends spreading their germs without even knowing the severity of things. It will be impossible for teachers to create a safe space for everyone When you are not putting better safety measures in place. This will result In major consequences. How are we lacking the proper protocols and changes to make this work without compromising our health?

You need to reconsider using the CDC guidelines Instead and stop making decisions that do not serve as an overall protection for everyone in our state and you need to

God Bless
Jodi Ebesu-Ortiz

Gmail

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

Testimony

Matthew Varney <matthew.varney@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

PLEASE PROTECT ME AND MY FAMILY.

The 3 feet, no mask guideline is UNACCEPTABLE AND NEGLIGENT!

From: Matthew Varney (teacher)
Aliamanu Middle 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 in an age group that is much more at risk than others. I also come home to a person who is far older than me.

Requiring me to be indoors in a class with about 15 students sitting 3 feet apart and not wearing face masks is **ALMOST CRIMINAL!** Then having that group of kids swap out with another group 5 times a day is **COMPLETELY LUDACRIS!** Your "plan" is **COMPLETELY CONTRARY** to everything I've been told to do to stay safe since March.

One more thing. Does the DOE plan on hiring about 5000 room cleaners? Have you figured out that you will likely need at least that many to thoroughly clean all classrooms once a day minimum?

Respectfully Submitted
Matthew Varney  Very Angry

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Henry Melzer <henry.melzer@campbell.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello BoE,
I wanted to reach out and voice my concerns with allowing 3ft social distancing in the class. I am extremely concerned about the health of my students' families and at-risk teachers. I understand the push to have as many students in the classroom as possible, but with cases rising again nationally across all age groups, it's way too risky to go forward with this. I'm 23, not married, and not particularly at risk, but some of my colleagues and parts of the community are. We really got to be careful here.
Mahalo,
Henry Melzer

Gmail

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

We need you... you need us

Dana <dana517@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:36 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Today I received the extremely upsetting news that the BOE is thinking of changing social distancing rules to 3 feet in the classroom. It is mindblowing that anyone would even consider anything as dangerous and reckless as this. I know you know the facts... the 30 to 40% of teachers who are of the vulnerable population and the 74 teachers who have died in New York.. that alone should be enough to shut this down. Teachers are willing to do almost anything for our students and to get back in the classroom, but to put our health, our student's health and the health of our families and student's families will not be tolerated.

Please be reasonable and give us the same safety I get when I go to 7 11.. and the same safety the DOH promised us.. 6 feet

-Dana Plotkin 15 years of service

Gmail

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

Testimony

Taryn Sato <daisygurl_54@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:40 PM
Reply-To: "daisygurl_54@yahoo.com" <daisygurl_54@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Taryn Decker. I am a Kindergarten teacher at Pu'u Kukui Elementary. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening of schools. I am appalled to have heard/read that the BOE believes that spacing of student desks 3 feet apart, without face masks is anything but acceptable. Please help me to understand why your board feels this is valid, when all I hear is social distancing of 6 feet or more and wearing a face mask will help to curb this virus? Basically, you are saying that the health and safety of the students, teachers, staff, and their families are meaningless.

I believe that my school is following the 6 foot distancing guidelines, because they care about the health and safety of their students and staff. I hope you do the same.
Teaching Kindergarteners to:
Social distance
Properly wash their hands
Cover their coughs and sneezes

Thank you for adding on another stressful point to the already anxiety ridden return of the school year.

Be Pono,
Taryn Decker
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Health concerns

Leah Rampolla <leahrampolla@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:41 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sir or Madam:
I am a full time English teacher at James Castle high school in Kaneohe.
I am concerned and uncomfortable regarding only 3 feet of space in classrooms. The consensus among health experts is at least 6 feet of distance between people to mitigate the spread of infection. Disregarding this guidance can be harmful to all members of the school community. Please consider expert health advice and the well being of students and staff in back to school planning. Thank you.
Sincerely,
Leah Rampolla, M.A.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Face masks

Virginia Wendehorst <vje1129@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:41 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

This will be my fifth year teaching special education and I love teaching. But, this year I return to school newly pregnant and with an autoimmune disease that makes me at high risk if I contract coronavirus. Teaching students face to face with no mask on, despite the plan to try to stay 6 feet apart, will not protect me from the students who unexpectedly cough or sneeze (and Yes, 6th graders still need reminders about how to cover a sneeze). Who are school leaders protecting, Just students? Or will they protect us as teachers too?

Anonymous

Gmail

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

Testimony Patricia Nevada

Patricia Nevada <nevadap@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:41 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a new teacher in the DOE. I have been working in the DOE for 8 years as an EA first. Then , last year I got my teacher's license and taught at Hokulani Elementary in Special Education.
I urge you to mandate that our opening protocols include that 'student desks will be 6 feet apart at least in the classroom.
We need to be protected as it is clear the Superintendent does not have our best interests at heart.
Thank you.

Patricia Nevada
7000 Hawaii Kai Dr
Honolulu HI
96825

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Megan Landes <meganfauth@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:42 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 about what the DOE is planning to do during the reopening of schools. According to The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) it is **recommended 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."
Please do not put my family, my students, and myself at risk by not following the guidelines established by the CDC. Students are to be 6 feet apart and wear masks when they are not 6 ft apart.

Megan Landes
Princess Nahi'ena'ena, Lahaina, HI

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kēhaunani Llanos <Kehau_Llanos@anuenue.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:43 PM

Testimony regarding discussion item VI (A) Presentation on The Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Aloha mai kākou,

‘O Kēhaunani Llanos ko‘u inoa. My name is Kēhaunani Llanos and I am a kumu at Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenue. I am not in support of 3 feet physical distancing while CDC regulations call for 6 feet distancing. I do understand that classrooms are limited in space but conducting class with keiki all facing the same way with 3 feet distancing is difficult. I am already worried on how to set up the room as I usually group them in pods with a set of 4 - 5 keiki to a table, pushing their desks together for small group work and discussion. Having the room with desks in rows facing the same way seems so counter productive to my educational philosophy of teaching.

Please do reconsider as you need to think of the teachers also. Keiki should be wearing masks all the time also. I know it is very difficult to wear a mask all the time but we need to keep each other safe, especially those, like me, who has a kupuna in the household. Mahalo nui for your time!

Ke aloha nō,
Kēhaunani Llanos

This e-mail is being sent by a student or employee of Kula Kaiapuni ‘O Ānuenue.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Steve <pistolsteve316@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, My Name is Steve Hathaway 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 teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary and I do not feel comfortable with students and faculty being 3 feet apart. I have people in my household that cannot get sick as they have underlying health conditions. Right now I feel like having a max of 10 kids in my classroom is all that I could take on and keep them 6 feet apart.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email and I hope you consider that feelings of the teachers that will be in the classrooms everyday.

Steve Hathaway
Alvah Scott Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

6 feet distance

BB C <bondster008@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:45 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I believe that the 6 feet distance should be practiced in and outside of the classroom. For the safety of students and teachers, 6 feet should be maintained whether its between students desk, or facing forward at all times. Everyone is practicing the six feet rule, why is the department of education doing otherwise. Please, follow the six feet rule, on the behalf of students, teachers, parents, and all concerned people.

Thank you.

Gmail

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

Testimony resubmitted about Covid 19

caugrl@aol.com <caugrl@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I forgot to identify myself in my prior testimony. So please accept this testimony in place of my other email:

Dear BOE,

The CDC recommendation is for people to use face masks and to maintain at least six feet of distance to reduce the chances of spreading Covid 19. Yet, the BOE would like to relax the rules? Why? Not following the recommendations of the CDC would most likely lead to an increase in viral cases and very likely deaths.

If the BOE relaxes the CDC recommendations then the BOE is assuming liability. If students and teachers get sick, have permanent disability and/or die from Covid 19, then expect to start having to have extra funds going towards payouts for injuries or deaths from catching Covid 19.

I've never sued anyone in my life, but if my kids come home with the virus or if I come home with the virus, expect that I will sue. I'm sure I'm not the only one who would sue. You absolutely cannot reduce the social distancing requirements given by the CDC!

I am not just a teacher who has a tendency to have breathing issues, but I am also a daughter and a parent. As a teacher, I have already lost former students to death. It is an immensely devastating experience. Young lives cut short is such a tragedy not only for the young person, their family and friends, but also for the community. I don't want to experience the pain of losing another student. If a student were to die because they were exposed to the virus in my classroom because the Board doesn't require CDC guidelines I don't think I could continue working as a teacher. I worry also that my students will bring home the virus to their families. I also worry about my own health. Even survivors of this disease are having permanent damage to their lungs and other organs. As a daughter, I worry that I will bring this home to my elderly parents. With teacher pay in Hawaii being the lowest in the nation when considering the cost of living, I have to live with my parents. I worry my kids will bring it home to their grandparents. I can't imagine the guilt we (my children and I) would have if we brought the virus home and it killed my parents. Not to mention, as a mother I worry about how kids in the mainland have died from this virus and how some kids now have permanent organ damage.

I empathize with the Board in having to open schools and having to deal with this pandemic. However, I cannot stand quietly by and allow the Board to make such reckless decisions to go against the scientific evidence that we currently know. The Board absolutely must require students to wear a mask. If a student has a medical reason for not being able to wear a mask, then the student should be participating only with distance learning. If the student is not healthy enough to be able to wear a mask, then they are most likely at high risk of having a bad outcome if they do catch the virus. I absolutely will not allow an unmasked student into my classroom in the middle of a pandemic. To allow this would be reckless behavior and against the expectations of my job as a teacher to protect my students.

Furthermore, I have been out shopping for food and I've noticed that adults are terrible at social distancing. Kids don't seem to understand the concept either. So, it is essential that kids wear masks and that part of this year's curriculum is to show students what six feet social distancing looks like and train them to use it. It would be irresponsible for the BOE to set the distancing example at three feet and then expect students to automatically use six feet in the playground and in the larger community.

The Board expects teachers to lead by example. As a teacher, I expect the Board of Education to do the same. Lead by example and require the use of masks and to maintain at least six feet of social distancing.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Cole
Moanalua High School Teacher

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail
Get the new AOL app: mail.mobile.aol.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ed Alonzo <ehalonzo@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a grandparent who will be picking up my three grandchildren attending three different schools in Mililani during the upcoming school year.

I heard that the Hawai'i State Board of Education agreed with HSTA that starting with fall school term, all Hawai'i students will attend in-classroom study 5 days a week While maintaining 6' distancing.

However, I heard that MIlilani students will maintain only a 3' distancing due to space availability. I object to this ruling. My grandchildren stay with me and my wife after school. I am 68 yrs old and my wife is 63. We are more susceptible to COVID-19 due to our age.

I recommend that 6' distancing be maintained. This can be made possible by alternating attendance of students. For example, a student attends school for three days this week and two days the following week. Days in between will be on-line attendance.

Please consider this alternative for the health of the students, teacher, and parents/guardians. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony

Kerri Glickstein <kerri.glickstein@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:46 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
My name is Kerri Glickstein, and I am a music teacher at Lānaʻi High and Elementary School on the island of Lānaʻi. I also have a five year old son who is registered to begin Kindergarten at the same school.

A mandate from the Board is needed to ensure the health and safety of our schools staff and students. A mandate from the Board will be challenging for schools to follow, but it is worth the investment and initial headache. For too long, students have been crammed in already full classrooms to save the state money. This Covid-19 crisis will force us to reimagine how our schools run. The lives of our students, staff, and their families all matter. Do not create breeding grounds for Covid-19 amongst our most valued and precious resource, our keiki.

I humbly ask that the Board of Education put its foot down on this matter for the safety and well-being of each and every person connected to our public school system. And in Hawaii, that's all of us. Everyone knows or is related to a child in school, or a teacher/staff member of our public school system. Please think and decide with aloha for us all.

Mahalo,
Kerri Glickstein

DOE music teacher
Mom of a kindergartener in a DOE school
Aunty of a kindergartener in a DOE school
Next door neighbor to two children in a DOE school

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

Testimony:Bad idea 6' distance cut to 3'

Maile Ann <maileanngidget@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:48 PM
Reply-To: "maileanngidget@yahoo.com" <maileanngidget@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha, my name is Maile Ann Kauo, who has taught for 25 yrs. or more. I teach at Kapaa Elem. Sch. on Kaua'i, servicing close to 850 students a yr. We are the largest elem sch. and service the students from far north, where the floods are to the Wailua Bridge. The clientele are of mixed groupings, but the free and reduced children are at a high rate. Parents are often not home to raise nor watch their child and any Covid19 pathogen that touches them or is airborne can get into them easily m make them sick.

6 vs 3 ft distancing? Without question, we do as the rest of the people do. We need 6 feet! We are not Guinea pigs. Or seen as trivial like those who easily slaughter young animals because their small. No it does not look aloha like, it looks like kealoha glory. Who will be next to go? Not until we are all vacvinned, should we diverge from the norm.

Hawaii does not always have to be first for outrageous things like gay marriages, or certain politics . All the notoriety does is put targets on our backs in case another country wants to harm the U S to make a point. Off the subject , 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.**

Now with all that being said, including the HSTA claim was made earlier that this 3 foot distance change proposal is "ludicrous and dangerous and puts our keiki, their families and our teachers at unnecessary risk, " one must look at how the setting of each class plays into this. This is where the real prop is no matter which way the child faces.
For ex I teach reading on comp and in small GRP. Room is shared w another teacher who has her ownnset of students. Only those seated next to fresh airway by door or window can it feel safest with 6 ft. Anyone placed inside away from fresh air is going to havre probs breathing w their masks. We will have fainting, dehydrating issues, and just the fact that we have no AC, 90 degree weather, w little varied wind is much to be desired. It is a pit of germs waiting to spread. So spread the students out please.

Thank you, Maile Kauo

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

Julia Chong <julia.mi.chong@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@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

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

Testimony

Lisa Yamagata <lnishizuka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:49 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 Lisa Yamagata and I am an employee at Waimea Canyon Middle School.

I urge the BOE to honor the contract agreement of 6 feet apart for students this school year. It was disheartening 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 to protect our students, their families, as well as the staff and their families. It doesn't make any sense to not follow the 6 foot social distancing guidelines that have been the norm during COVID-19. Why is it okay for schools to go down to 3 ft?

I hope that the BOE decides to honor the contract MOU between the DOE and HSTA and enforce 6 feet. Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,
Lisa Yamagata

Gmail

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

mask and 6 feet distancing in school

Maria Sack <msack@weis.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:51 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: techhelpgal@gmail.com

Aloha
I am currently a teacher at Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate school. Please help us keep our students and faculty safe by helping all schools to achieve 6 feet distancing during school hours. Providing everyone with masks and cleaning supplies will also help keep the spread of Covid-19. Thank you for supporting our students, teachers and staff. By supporting us you are supporting the whole community from the spread of Covid-19.

Sent from my iPhone

--
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>

Testimony

reyoshnee@yahoo.com <reyoshnee@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:52 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Renee Tada and I am a teacher from Kipapa 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.

Rita Pierson once shared a saying that she gives to her students every year and it is, "I am somebody. I was somebody when I came. I'll be a better somebody when I leave. I am powerful, and I am strong. I deserve the education that I get here." Today, at this very moment, let me be that somebody for my students, my colleagues, and my own family.

The year, 2020, has brought on a new norm for everyone and it has become an era of growth and self-reflection. It is an experience that many of us are taking on one day a time and handling situations in ways that are most comfortable for each of us and the people that we care for.

With the opening of a new school year on its way, let educators use what is left of 2020 as a time of being proactive and create a school year that we get to finish with our students face-to-face. To accomplish this, keep the placing of students and teachers in the classroom six feet apart. To succeed, support educators and allow us to be there for our students safely. There is a teacher shortage, as well as maintaining substitute teachers, and everyone's health in the education system is important.

Thank you.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sarah Davis <sarahdavis09@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:54 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Sarah Davis. I teach fifth grade at Kapaa Elementary. 6 feet needs to be mandatory in the school setting. That means in the classroom, in the cafeteria, the playground, or anywhere on the school campus. You see the cases are rising so why would it be smart to think 3 feet is OK? Once the schools open, the children have a higher chance to get infected as well as teachers and then what the school will need to shut down? 3 feet is not even recommended by the CDC. How are you going to test for temperatures? Children already do not practice correct cleaning habits.I myself am a teacher and I do NOT feel safe at all. As soon as travel opens completely, local people already a higher risk of getting infected (especially those in the tourist/health industry). Next, the families who work with those who are infected can infect their children and then their children can infect their classmates and their teacher. Would you want that? I am seriously scared of catching the virus due to the lack of spacing in the school setting and everywhere else. If I get sick, I do not see myself returning back to the profession until the virus is gone. Teachers NEED to feel safe upon returning and I believe the schools should NOT even open until there are four weeks of no cases on Kauai. Why are you putting teachers staff and students at risk? I plan to start a family soon (or would like to) and it's hard to see if I can or not because I may get sick. I definitely do not want my future children to get sick because of me getting sick at school then bringing it home. Please consider 6 feet everywhere on the campus. Or do not open the schools. Because right now I do not feel safe.

Sent from my iPhone

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

Kathleen Grondin <kmgrondin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

As a teacher and a parent, I am appalled at the change from social distancing of 6 ft. apart as recommended by the CDC to 3 ft. apart as long as children are facing the same direction.

I am also sickened by the reality that decision basically takes schools back to how things were before with just the caveate that kids can't face each other. Be real. The desks were always supposed to be 3 ft. apart because of fire rules. This change is simply a way to reopen without much having to be done. It is the lazy approach to this problem.

Having said this, there are several other reasons why I feel this is a bad idea. These are the reasons I oppose this change:

1. ***Is the DOE really willing to sacrifice the health of our Keiki to COVID-19 simply to make it easier to open our schools?*** Think about it. The CDC tells parents to try to help stop the spread of COVID-19 among children by doing the following things: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/protect-children.html]

--> "**Put distance between your children and other people** outside of your home. Keep children at least 6 feet from other people."
--> **"Limit time with other children**."

So, how can the DOE honestly tell parents they are putting the welfare of the children first if the DOE itself is not willing to practice the suggestions of the CDC?

2. ***We really do not know how serious COVID-19 is for children.*** It has only been in the last few weeks that doctors have begun to realize that many children exposed to or infected with COVID-19 end up being more susceptible to other serious diseases such as Kawasaki Syndrome even though they themselves seemed asymptomatic from COVID itself. This is not surprising. Most of the data we have comes from research focussed on adults. Many parents whose child might have been infected might not have had their child tested because the understanding was they are not high risk. So I doubt we even know what the actual infection rate among children really is or how serious any side effects might be.

3. ***It is not the direction of the desks that makes social distancing possible. It's the distance.*** Think about it. Decreasing the distance between desks from 6 ft. To 3 ft. is ludicrous even if the desks face the same direction. How are teachers supposed to stop kids from turning in their seats to the person next to them? They can't. So putting desks 3 ft. apart simply eliminates the social distancing we are being asked to create.

4. ***Decreasing the distance between desks increases the number of students we can fit in our classrooms. Increasing class sizes eliminates the CDC's recommendation concerning limiting the number of people our Keiki are exposed to.*** Again, think about it. The CDC

tells parents to limit children's exposure to only time spent with people in the same household. How can the DOE honestly say they are doing the same when they decrease the social distance to allow for more students in the classroom? The truth is they can't.

5. ***By increasing the risk of exposure to our Keiki, we are increasing the risk of exposure to the rest of the school staff and to the community at large.*** Many of our students go home to grandparents who are high risk. Many of our teachers and staff are older or have underlying conditions that make them high risk. Creating a way to fit more people in a room only increases the chances people will get sick. The last thing Hawaii needs is to make our schools into new centers of infection. Reducing the distance to 3 ft. will likely do that.

Do you really want to have to explain to parents and the community at large how you thought it was a good idea to not social distance effectively at school after the fact? ***If you follow through with this, the headlines at the end of September will read: PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN HAWAII ARE BECOMING CESSPOOLS OF COVID-19 INFECTIONS.*** How will you get around that?

As a teacher I am thoroughly disappointed that the DOE is not honoring it Memorandum of Understanding with HSTA by doing this. But I am even more disillusioned by the fact that the DOE is basically throwing health and well being of our Keiki and our citizens under the bus just to reopen with as little change as possible.

Please do not do this!!!!

Gmail

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

Testimony

Laura Goodrich <goodrichl001@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:59 PM
Reply-To: Laura Goodrich <goodrichl001@hawaii.rr.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Good afternoon,

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 Laura Goodrich and I am an 8th grade special education teacher at Kamakahelei Middle School, Lihue, Hawaii.

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 (from COVID-19). I believe that returning to a 3-foot space seating while there is currently no vaccine for COVID-19 would present a health danger to both students and adults in our schools' meeting spaces, and I am against it.

The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. How can we, as teachers and mentors of Hawaii's children, endanger our students in this manner, especially when many of our students live in multi-generational households which include older relatives whose immune systems are already compromised? As teachers, we already know that trying to keep students socially distanced before and after school, and at recess will be a monumental task. Students are social by nature and may not fully understand the health consequences of their actions. In addition, by the time school is scheduled to begin, we will have already opened our state to tourists who may not show symptoms of the virus upon entry to our state or may have received a false negative test prior to arriving in Hawaii. This would bring COVID-19 into contact with members of our resident families. Students in these families who are then infected with the virus, but asymptomatic, and who attend school without maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing in school meeting areas will spread the virus to peers and staff. In addition to the negative health consequences, this scenario could quickly result in having to shut our schools down and return to 100% distance learning.

Please, for the safety of Hawaii's children, teachers and families, honor the agreement made with HSTA to maintain 6 feet or 2 arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds.

Thank you,
Laura Goodrich

Gmail

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

Testimony - Discussion Item VI(A)

Juvir Martin <juvir.m@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 2:59 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the Board,

My name is Juvir Martin, a teacher at Iao Intermediate School in Wailuku, Maui, and 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 am concerned about the Hawaii Department of Education's (HIDOE) health and safety guidance. The HIDOE suggests that it is acceptable to space students' seats/desks three feet apart *without* requiring the use of face coverings. This contradicts the agreement between the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA), and the State of Hawaii and Board of Education. Further, not requiring six feet distancing in the classroom is contrary to the Centers for Disease Control's recommendation, which is cited in the HIDOE's health and safety guidance.

> *The virus is spread person to person between people within close contact (about 6 feet) via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby where the droplets are inhaled into the lungs.The Centers for Disease Control notes that placing students and teachers less than 6-feet apart, without face coverings, creates a high risk for the spread of COVID-19.*

For the safety of our keiki and school staff, I urge the Board and the HIDOE to honor the contractual agreement with HSTA, and have classrooms configured to ensure six feet between student desks.

Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,

Juvir Martin
Wailuku, Maui

Gmail

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

Testimony

jkkubota@hawaiiantel.net <jkkubota@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha.

My name is Joy Kubota. I am a 1st Grade teacher at Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School in Lahaina, 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 very concerned about the current plan that states the minimum distance for desks to be set up can be as little as 3 feet provided they are facing forward. I work with some of the youngest students. They are developmentally unable to adhere to the social distancing, face covering, and hygiene rules in the manner that is expected. Their short attention span and limited stamina make it impossible for them to sit in one position for long periods of time.

My other area of concern is the fact that I fall into the extremely high risk category not only because of my age, health issues, and family history, but also more importantly because I am a caregiver to my elderly mother who has several health conditions that put her at greater risk for complications from COVID-19 or any other illness she may develop. The close proximity, inability to social distance, and not being required to wear face coverings in the classrooms will result in everyone unknowingly passing on illnesses they may have to other people. Several students and staff members became severely ill last school year. I am afraid the same thing will happen if we do not have the CDC recommended safety measures in place that were agreed upon by our union and the DOE.

Please reinstate the 6 foot distancing requirement of the desks, seriously consider requiring the wearing of face coverings in classrooms in addition to everywhere else, and implement any other safety measures to protect everyone. The health and safety of our school Ohana is critical to its reopening, and ability to remain open. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,

Joy Kubota

Gmail

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

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year

Cody MC <cody.miyashiro.carvalho@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:02 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 for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Cody Miyashiro-Carvalho and I am a parent at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School. We live with our parents and my wife has severe asthma. We do not feel safe and confident that the Department of Education is doing all that it should to ensure that my child, his peers, and his teachers are being taken care of! It is extremely concerning to me that the Board of Education would put the families of Hawai'i at risk. Please change it to six feet.

Best,
Cody Miyashiro-Carvalho

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lauren Fujii <laurenfujii@ymail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it May Concern:

As both a parent and teacher, I strongly oppose the BOE's recommendation for three-foot distancing in classrooms. It is highly unlikely that students would remain forward-facing the entire time they are in class. Why would we want to compromise the health of both students and educators simply to fit more children in a classroom? Why isn't the BOE taking into account the CDC recommended guidelines of six-feet?

Respectfully,

Lauren K. Fujii
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sarah Mae Pecson <sarahmaepecson@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Sarah Mae Pecson and I teach at Waipahu High 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 disappointed reading the DOE's proposed plan for reopening schools, specifically the suggested minimum 3-foot distance between desks. Everywhere we go -- grocery stores, shopping malls, DMV, libraries, etc. -- social distancing at 6 feet is mandatory and simply courteous to those around. Six feet is the minimum distance proposed by the CDC to keep us safe; so why does the DOE think it's safe for kids to be only 3 feet apart? I do not believe this is okay, nor is it beneficial for students' and teachers' health. With a 3 foot distance from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arm out and be able to touch the person next to them. Desks should be at least 6 feet apart so that students can feel safe and protected from germs and potential sickness.

As a teacher and parent of a toddler, health and safety are of the utmost importance to me. I want to go home at the end of a workday and feel like I am healthy and not passing anything down to my husband and daughter. PLEASE make safety for ALL the priority and education second. Let your teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won’t. Teachers have first-hand experience of what it's like being in a classroom and they should have a say on the decisions that need to be made in these unprecedented times. Please consider revamping your plan for reopening schools to make it safe for all.

Thank you for listening,
Sarah Mae Pecson
English Teacher
Waipahu High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michele Weinhouse <michele64w@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I know that these are difficult times and no one knows the answers. We are all trying to figure it out, make it work and just do our job. All I want is to teach...in the classroom...with my students present. I worry about the long term ramifications of the students going through this pandemic and how their academic growth will be stunted.

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," what bothers me about "the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education (BOE), the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) **released health and safety guidance** that said spacing student seats three feet apart without masks was acceptable" contradicts HSTA's agreement with the state that 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” is not that 3 feet is okay or 6 feet is okay is that the state changed the language AFTER it was already agreed upon. As I stated in my first sentence, I do not know nor does the state know who is correct. What I have a problem with is that HSTA, which acts on behalf of myself and in my best interest to do what is right, was disregarded. If the 3 feet was what the State needed the language to state, that should have been discussed with HSTA and not changed after the fact. I'm sure there are many factors to consider. I trust HSTA's leadership as I would trust the state's leadership to communicate, discuss and negotiate the best circumstances for all. Communication is key and transparency is required. It saddens me that our country's leadership and our state's leadership are breaking down because decisions are made in a vacuum, devoid of the voice from people for which they represent. We must work together, it is the only way we can get through this. Please reconsider changing the language back to what was agreed upon or renegotiate with HSTA upfront so that we can move forward and get back to what we need to do--educate our keiki.

Sincerely,

Michele Weinhouse
HS Chemistry, CTE & STEM Teacher
Lana`i High & Elementary School, Lana`i

Gmail

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

Testimony

clint williams <clintwilliams808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item V1.(A) Presentation on Department of Educations comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2021School year.

As a parent of an educator at Milliani High school, I am shocked that this reopening plan completely disregards the CDC recommended social distancing requirement of at least 6 feet and the requirement for all students to wear a mask. The 3 foot distance that has been “approved" by the BOE is both reckless and very short sighted and will result in many new covid-19 cases as well as putting both our teachers and students in grave physical danger.

Given that the BOE is blatenly disregarding the CDC recommendations I wonder what the what legal ramifications ot the implementaion of this plan are for both the State and the BOE.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Henry C Williams

Gmail

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

Testimony

Courtney Klecan-Lau <ckleclau@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:03 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I am asking you to please take in to consideration the health and safety of not only our keiki and school staff, but the families of all involved. Please consider the 6 foot social distancing guidelines distributed by the CDC. While teachers understand how important it is for our keiki to return to school, we have our health and the health of our families to consider. I have a newborn baby at home and I am terrified to bring the virus home to her when I return to school in August. Please do not put our teachers in this scary situation.
Mahalo,
Courtney LAU
Waikiki School
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kelley Toor <kelley.toor@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board of Education of Hawai'i,

Please accept this message as testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening School's Plan for the 2020-21 School Year.

I am a Special Education teacher at Kapalama Elementary School. It was my understanding that at the end of the school year, I would have 8 students to service in the Resource Room setting in grades 4 and 5. As of today, 3 more students have registered at my school and will be under my care. I have a typical sized classroom with children diagnosed with ADHD who constantly touch their face, pick their noses, and do not control their sneezes. My Educational Assistant has a medical condition that affects her immune system, and I am afraid that she will not come to work due to the current environmental climate. Additionally, I live with elderly parents, one of whom has COPD and the other who cannot take care of him because she is in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease. I also have a 17-year old daughter who attends Moanalua High School. She is afflicted with Crohn's Disease, which affects her immune system in unpredictable ways. I am the SOLE caregiver and caretaker to these 3 individuals when I am not at work. Should I contract this virus, I would be at a loss as to who would take on the responsibility of taking care of my family.

For me, three feet of social distancing without the requirement for students to wear mask, or the requirement for proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before attending school is unnacceptable. I consider it dangerous for me to go to work at my school, which adapted a plan for all students- grade Pre-K to 5- to attend daily with the accommodation of adding one more class to each grade level.

I would like to ask that you require a distancing of 6 feet between all student desks. We have known about this virus for at least half a year now, and we are now entering a dangerous phase with new test results emerging positive each day. How can you reassure me that 3 feet social distancing is adequate in a classroom, and what will the repercussions be for the state should just one teacher, custodian, cafeteria worker, speech therapist, or administrator die as a result of spread within the school? I have very little faith that this will not happen.

I do not believe that every option has been exhausted and am looking forward to hearing how these collaborative talks support our students and the lives of the adults who support them every day.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelley Toor
Kapalama Elementary School
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

Wearing masks and 6 feet distancing

Francine Edralin <palak1ne@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:08 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I believe that students as well as teachers should feel safe in school. They all need to wear masks in the classroom and practice the 6 feet social distancing. They come from various walks of life and who knows where they go, what they do, and who they hang out with? Maybe half the students should attend school and the other half do distance learning at home. It would create more space for 6 feet distance learning in school.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Masks

Lyn Sarver <lsarver64@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:11 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please change the wording so that it says all students are “required” to wear masks rather than “shall” wear masks
Thank you. Concerned teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Call for Change on Mask Rule & 3/6ft. Classroom Distancing

Melanie Okimoto <melah05@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:13 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

My name is Melanie Okimoto. I've been an elementary teacher in the DOE for 16 years. I'm writing in regards to concerns that I have on the DOE's policy for reopening our schools, specifically, the 3ft. rule of physical distancing in the classroom and optional mask wearing in our schools. In the best interest of safety for our faculty, staff, and students, we should adhere to the CDC guidelines of 6ft distancing and wearing masks when out in public. Moreover, our state has now mandated that when out in public, whether outdoor or indoor, everyone must wear a mask. Why then would that not be the case for our public schools?! When we stand in line to buy take-out food or check out at a grocery store register, we must stand 6ft apart, but not in our public schools where students will be sitting together in a classroom for hours everyday? How does this make any sense?! This contributes to the confusion of the public when our state cannot all be in agreement -- it just sends mixed messages! So, I am pleading with you that these changes are made immediately before our public schools can reopen.

In addition to these requests, I also believe that classroom sizes should be capped at 10 to a classroom, to include the teacher. This would help teachers/adults to monitor their students and ensure better physical distancing and more proper hygiene amongst everyone.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter,
Melanie Okimoto

November 1, 2016

Chair DeLima and committee members,

As a teacher, parent and community member, I wanted to address the dangers of this historical moment. With the passage of historic federal law, we have heard a great deal about the opportunities for change afforded to state policy makers, with the devolution of control of education to the state level. You can change the entire direction of public education, empowering those closest to students to create a system that addresses the achievement gap in student-centered ways. Even more fundamentally, you now have the power to shift the system away from the test-centric approach to education to one that fosters creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking, and to create a system where students, teachers, parents and community members thrive. You now have that power.

However, it is also true that such a context is dangerous, because students, teachers, parents and community members have begun to hope for change that may be challenging. Students have begun to hope for learning environments in which creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, innovation, and social-emotional learning are embedded into classroom instruction. Teachers have begun to hope for work environments where they are supported and challenged to be creative, visionary risk-takers. Parents have begun to hope for schools that cultivate the special qualities of each child, rather than reducing each child to a test score. Community members have begun to hope for a school system in which their contributions are welcomed and supported, and where they are seen as legitimate partners in public education.

The most important change that could come out of this process is the active, intentional, and continuous engagement of our public schools with their communities around the shared purpose of inspiring, engaging and motivating students.

In 2012, the DOE submitted a report to the legislature in reference to Senate Concurrent Resolution 145, which had requested that the BOE and DOE collaborate with parent organizations to develop statewide policies for family and community engagement in Hawaii's public schools (http://tinyurl.com/h996vxj). There were two critical findings of this report, regarding School Community Councils and Parent Community Networking Centers that have not been addressed by policy makers. The BOE should take the lead on addressing these issues with state lawmakers.

The first important finding of the report has to do with the critical role played by parent liaisons. The Parent Community Networking Centers (PCNCs), created by the Reinventing Education Act 51 of 2004, made it possible for parent facilitators at every school to be trained as liaisons between families and the

schools. The PCNC system was becoming increasingly effective in connecting parents, communities and schools until it was crippled by the 2007 shift of funding for PCNCs to Weighted Student Formula (WSF). Many principals, given the multiple demands of limited funding created by testing requirements, failed to fund this position. This issue can and should be addressed in the DOE/BOE's request to the legislature for funding: rather than asking for positions at the state level for administrative needs, the **BOE should request that the budget request be modified to include full funding for school level PCNC positions**.

The second important finding of the report was that School Community Councils, created under Act 51, are failing to engage teachers, school staff, parents, students and community members as shared decision-makers with principals. The original design of school-community based decision-making, as articulated in *Project Ke Au Hou* (http://tinyurl.com/h6x46ce), was initially crippled by the modification of the decision-making process of SCCs under Act 51. The BOE should **ask the legislature to revisit the SCC statute** because it is restrictive and out of touch with the culture of flexibility and school empowerment towards which the governor has asked the state to move. If Section 302A-1124 (g):

> *The principal shall have the authority to set aside any decision made by the school community council if the principal determines it to be in the best interests of the school*;

were to be rewritten (if not wholly repealed), we could move towards democratizing decision-making at the school level, which would reinvigorate and strengthen community involvement in schools.

I strongly suggest that the current BOE members examine the findings of this legislative report from 2012, and begin to consider ways in which we can move forward to improve family and community engagement in Hawaii public schools. We already know that openness and transparency are critical for community trust, which is why the move towards more community access to BOE meetings is so important, but it is even more important to address the sources of alienation, cynicism and mistrust at the school level.

The danger of this moment is that our window of opportunity will close, with insufficient change, which will only lead to deepened cynicism and acceleration of the multiple crises currently experienced simultaneously by our schools.

This is a big lift. But I am confident that it can be accomplished.

Sincerely,

Amy Perruso

Gmail

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

Regarding school restarting in August

Albert Fung <albertf@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:14 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,
I would like to submit testimony regarding children returning to school in August. It does not seem like there is a solid plan in place to keep them from catching COVID? What if they bring it home, we have an at-risk elderly person here.

I would much rather a standard stand-wide online class similar to how Iolani or Punahou has. I would appreciate a single sign on system for each child to log into their school classrooms, receive instructions, and log out during lunch or end of school day.
I have 3 children. One goes to middle school and has 6 different teachers with 6 different websites to go to.

ANY plan to return to school without a proper vaccine is a pending death sentence.

Thank you,
Albert Fung

Gmail

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

Questions not answered yet

Elizabeth Lovejoy-Yundt <3bizhawaii7@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:15 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am wondering these: will we be given extra PPEs for people who come to school without them? Or those who ruin theirs or others' just being childish? Do any of those people have trouble wear masks? Difficulty with physical boundaries such as grabbing? Or do they have a limited cognitive understanding of "social distancing"? Or who need hand over hand assistance to be prompted through daily tasks?
Is there a plan in process for covering us with Workers Comp if we do get sick, or are we to use our sick leave?

Gmail

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

BOE testimony

Denise Low <kilalow@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I write as a parent of an upcoming Kindergarten and 2nd grade parent and a 1st grade educator. I write because I am very confused by this entire process. Granted we have been told time and time again that things will change weekly, daily, even hourly because the COVID-19 pandemic has taken control of our rights as human beings. It dictates our daily living.

As a graduate student and National Boards candidate, I am confused. Collaboration, communication, problem solving, and listening and reasoning are at the forefront of my own teaching. But it seems as though our own state leaders are not communicating with one another and our unions. Oftentimes the public hears before the educators involved. We are all on different pages. How are we supposed to teach our future students to be democratic in their thinking when we cannot even be good role models and model this for them. With this lack of communication, YOU are causing frustrations amongst administration, faculty, and other union members from other bargaining units. You are causing frustration to the public because they are being misinformed. This COVID-19 had brought kindness and empathy to the public. Now with the leadership on the top it is bringing frustration and confusion. It brings control and power from the authorities above. I teach my students about power and authority. Is this getting out of control and egos getting in the way of safety.

With this issue on 3ft distance of students, what is the real answer? The CDC says one thing, the AAP says another. As I teach my 1st grade students, when you come up with an answer, provide reasons for your choice of action. Provide evidence. I ask you BOE, where is your research coming from, what evidence do you have that a 3ft distance is safe? Where did these numbers come from? If it came from our DOH, where did they get their answers from? What research is linked behind it?
I hope that you folks have a solution based approach moving forward, a transparent one with no hiding of information and that all parties can sit as civilized adults and come to an agreement for the safety of all involved.

Thank you,
Ms. Low

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

There is no safe plan for opening schools this Fall

De Austin <dezireenaustin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I am a public school teacher, resident of Maui and a parent.

I am most concerned for our most vulnerable populations regarding COVID-19: the elderly. the infirm, the young.

I suspect the lack of resources, facilities and staff is what is pushing our educational leaders to consider the variety of plans for opening, many of which do not follow CDC guidelines.

I am certain that the BOE has considered many options but here are four, just in case.

We are likely too late to train all teachers to be well-versed in 'online learning' but there are different tech scenarios which could work.

Here is one of them. Some schools may have a team-lead or teacher-lead who is comfortable with technology. She/he/they can create a web page with links to assignments and downloadable or online work assignments. This is something far simpler than Google classroom but it could work if a teacher has limited experience with online technology. There's also emailing students work that should be done, and students can email back completed work. Math can be assessed online.
Great suggestions for K-8 are:

Vocabularycity.com has online spelling and other tests. Timezattack is an award-winning, research proven online approach for learning multiplication. It is also now part of Imagine Learning. The long-running BrainPop has SHORT videos and accompanying quizzes on a variety of topics, from science to social studies. Newslela is engaging news content for K-12 readers, has quizzes, and has the unique feature of allowing students to 'choose their reading level'.

The key to online instruction is not to exhaust the student or the teacher. Short assignments work better; and teaching staff must strive to balance the workload among all teachers' expectations for shared students.

I personally think that starting the school year with online instruction would be best; eliminating unnecessary testing to prevent computer-burnout for our students; encouraging teachers to teach in 'short bursts', such as 10-15 minute instructional time, and then 30-35 minutes off-line time with a specific task, which could include reflection and/or discussion of the day's topic could work.

This is all very possible. It's a new type of learning but the technology already exists. What we need is financial and public support for this.

Please review the current situation and I urge you to direct schools to focus on online instruction and not face to face, until such time that health experts agree that COVID-19 has been mitigated.

Respectfully,

Dezireen Austin

Gmail

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

3 feet is NOT enough

Mailei Stachel <mstachel@kawaihonapcs.org>
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:16 PM

Aloha,
My name is Mailei Kaylor and I am a second grade teacher at Ka Waihona O ka Na'au'ao Public charter school.

I am very concerned with the fact that with the numbers rising with today's count of 41 being the highest count yet we are even thinking about sending teachers and students back to work.

With that being said- if we are going back it is NOT safe that they sit 3 feet apart when the CDC is saying 6 feet. Are you keeping the children safe and what about the teachers and staff ?!!

We all have immune compromised people in our lives that we go home to. People who if they did contract covid would face some pretty serious problems. I think you need to be more considerate when thinking of shoving young children into classrooms and expecting 3 feet distance or even 6 for that matter to keep everyone safe !!!
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

joanna pillittieri <jpillittieri@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Joanna Pillittieri & I teach at Kalihi-Waena 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. Three feet among students & teachers is unacceptable!

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

Gmail

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

Returning to school

stacia sage <s-sage@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:21 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a special education teacher at Laie Elementary school on Oahu. We just had our first staff meeting and was appalled to find that students will NOT be required to wear a face mask while in the classroom. I understand all the reasons face masks are difficult, but this is a pandemic. I have huge concerns teaching 10 to 12 students in a classroom with no face coverings. Kids will not be able to stay 6 feet apart, that is the reality. Face masks slow the spread of this virus, this is a fact.
I want to be able to teach my students in person. I also want to stay healhty and not bring a deadly virus home to my family which includes 2 people over 65.
The only smart and responsible way to do this is to have all students who can wear masks, do so for all times except when eating lunch and drinking water.
Going back without masks will only ensure the shut down of the school system again. Your board will have to live with your decision,and the consequences of. Please choose to listen to science, please choose to think of everyones health as opposed to wants and wishes.
I too want and wish we could could go back to complete normalcy, but we are in the midst of a growing pandemic, now is a time to use reason, caution and restraint.

The worls is watching,

Stacia Sage

Sent on my Virgin Mobile Phone.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY- 6 feet distancing in schools

kris kau <kaukris1@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:22 PM
Reply-To: "kaukris1@yahoo.com" <kaukris1@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a third grade teacher on Maui and I am writing to request that all schools be mandated to follow 6ft distancing guidelines. As teachers we want what's best for our students and understand that providing a quality education is important. We also need to protect ourselves, and our family members. I refuse to put our lives in danger for the sake of others. If we cannot mandate all students to wear masks, the least you can do is mandate the 6 ft minimum distancing guidelines. Thank you for your consideration.

Kris Shirota-Hong

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

Renz Lorenzo <renz_lorenzo@momilanies.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:22 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 Renz Lorenzo and I am a school teacher at Momilani Elementary school, Pearl City complex, Leeward District.

I am not comfortable with spacing student seats three feet apart without masks. **This directly contradicts our agreement with the state** and 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.” 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. This very thought scares me.

I live with both of my parents who are almost 60 years old. I do not want to run the risk of contracting the virus and getting my family sick. Please reconsider your requirements.

For the health and safety of ALL people, please keep to the 6 feet social distancing in our public schools. Please keep our students, teachers, and our families safe.

Mahalo!

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Have a nice day,

Renz Argen Lorenzo

Elementary School Teacher | Momilani Elementary School
Class of 2017 | Hawaii Pacific University
M.Ed in Elementary Education | HPU Graduate School of Education
Class of 2015 | Chapman University
B.A. in Communications; Minor in English | Wilkinson College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Minor in Music | College of Performing Arts

Gmail

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

Testimony

delacruzp001@hawaii.rr.com <delacruzp001@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:22 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hi my name is Terri dela Cruz and I am a 5th grade teacher at Wahiawa Elementary School. I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A). It is absurd to me that 6ft is the minimum recommended distance for everyone yet we are allowing our keiki to sit 3 feet apart in a classroom, if they face forward. Any person who actually visits a classroom and sees the reality of one would see that students will NOT remain facing forward for very long, so realistically the distance will be even shorter than 3 feet. If we truly care about our keiki and the educators who have to be with them day in and day out, we would not compromise their health and safety by shortening the distancing by 1/2! How is that ethical and acceptable? I urge the DOE to be adamant in their guidance that we practice physical distancing of 6 feet whenever possible, including in the classroom. Why is it allowable for our precious keiki if we know it is not safe for the rest of us?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sherri U. <suecke@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Sherri Uecke, and 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.

As a teacher at Leilehua High and a mother of children who attend Palisades Elementary, I'm writing to share my concerns about the DOE's position that student's desks can be three feet apart as long as students face the same direction.

As a teacher and a parent I feel that not abiding by the CDC guidelines for 6 feet of distancing puts me, my children and my students at risk for contracting COVID 19 thus creating not only an unsafe environment but one that causes anxiety and inhibits learning.

I ask that the DOE to be firm and consistent in its guidance that students and teachers practice mask wearing and physical distancing of six feet whenever possible, even in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Sherri Uecke

Gmail

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

Testimony

Briann Starkey <kekamaboy4@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Who 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 Briann Starkey and I am a teacher at Kualapuu Public Conversion Charter School on the island of Molokai. I have been a teacher for 13 years here. My 3 children attend all different schools here on the island: Molokai High School, Molokai Intermediate School and Kualapuu Public Conversion Charter School.

I do not support the decision and plan for reopening with the 3-feet policy as it will not be safe for all.

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!

Briann Starkey

Gmail

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

Testimony

Carol Esquibel <carolesquibel@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We live in strange and precarious times, where everything is not as clear as it was before. The news and statistics are no longer trustworthy sources of evidence. What is the right thing to do? My mother always said to lean on the side of caution.

This means that we all need to be careful even if it is not as clear as it maybe. I am the first to admit I don't like wearing a mask, I can't breath and it sweats. I do wear a mask because I want to protect those that might be vulnerable to Covid 19. I don't like being so far away from my students I cannot show my care and affection to them.

Recently I learned the Filipino greeting during Covid 19, it is putting your hand over your heart and bowing your head in acknowledgement and care. Let all of us lean on the side of caution. Masks, shields and social distancing are all necessities to protect our students and ourselves from a virus that has no vaccine as of yet. Six feet is leaning on the side of caution.

Leaning Always on the Side of Caution
Mrs Carol Esquibel
Ewa Makai Middle School
8th Grade FSC
In the Jungle, the mighty Jungle

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Public Safety

Marcus Nakama <nakama.marcus@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Marcus and I work at Campbell 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 US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that schools space seating 6 feet apart, which is incongruent with the plan to allow students to be 3 feet apart in classrooms. I am concerned about the health and safety of the students and families I serve as well as that of my fellow educators. The plan to reopen for the school year 2020-2021 must be reconsidered.

The clearly definite parameters for re-opening the school have been agreed upon and back tracking on that agreement is wrong. I am eager to re-opening schools, but what will be the cost socially, political, and economically if we rush the issue without properly address health issues of all stakeholders. The State recent 41 case record is a troubling sign that everyone is becoming relaxed about health precautious, without clear language and strict adherence to safety measure we could if not already facing a second wave and possible prolonged shut down of our state. We have suffered long enough and the long term economic damage will be felt for years to come, let's not contribute to the crisis with ill conceived plans and "good enough" measures.

Thank You,

--
Marcus Nakama

University of Northern Colorado
BA in History and Social Sciences
University of Hawaii
Masters of Education

Gmail

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

Testimony

Caroline Chida <takakami71@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear State Leaders,

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 Caroline Chida and I am a first grade teacher at Makalapa Elementary School.
I am very disappointed with the guidelines proposed by the DOE and DOH. More than disappointed, I am appalled and very scared to go back to school under these circumstances.

It may look fine on paper, but realistically, children, especially those in the lower grades will not be able to sit in their seats and face forward the whole day. Would you be able to? They will squirm, move about, touch each other, and get out of their seats. So the 3' distancing is not realistic. Plus, they won't understand the reasoning behind this structured environment. Thus, I'm advocating for at least 6' distancing.

Classrooms are not built equally, spacewise. Please come and look at the various classrooms and tell us how we can safely put in 20+ desks.

The Ohana bubble or cohort has been brought up. But that is not realistic either. We will still have cross contamination. If supervisors come in to watch the students during lunch, the supervisors will be moving from various classes. Aren't they bringing in germs? What about the students when they go home? Aren't they being exposed to germs there, and then bringing them to school? What about substitute teachers coming in when we get sick?

All this talk about making the environment normal for the kids, how socialization and their emotional growth is important , I realize that. Teachers know that. We want to be with the kids and teach them daily. But isn't the issue SAFETY and HEALTH first?

As I said in the beginning I'm scared. I'm in the high risk group and I also take care of my elderly parent. I don't want to be forced to retire, I want to leave on my own terms, but I may be forced to retire, and there are others who feel the same.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this matter. I would only hope that whenever matters regarding schools come up, leaders such as you all would take the time to talk to the teachers, not just the principals.

Sincerely,
Caroline Chida

Gmail

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

Testimony

Alex Kendrick <alexvkendrick@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please protect the children and keep them at a proper social distance of six feet. It will help to protect the children and their families. There really is no other way right now.

--
alexvkendrick@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Johanna Lynn Magaoay <johanna_lynn.magaoay@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:29 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 Johanna Lynn A Magaoay and I am speaking as a staff. I work at Highlands Intermediate School.

As an Educational Assistant, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between children to keep safe distance from each other. I am working very closely with our students. Some of our kids doesn’t even know that so-called personal space. We remind them time to time. For the 3 feet distancing, I don’t think they will be able to practice it inside the classroom.

I am worried that I might catch the virus from the school and could bring it home with me. I have a 3-year old son waiting for me to hug at the end of the day and how sure am I that it’s safe for him to do it with me?

For me, it is still not safe to go back to school. There is a high risk reopening the schools, considering that there is no vaccine yet for the virus. I know that Education is important but SAFETY should be the number 1 priority.

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Melanie Matsumura-Uyeda <melawela@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:31 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Melanie Matsumura-Uyeda 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 teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hilo. As the Department of Education, we are not only responsible for the education of our states children but we also need to protect their health and well-being. CDC guidelines clearly state that face coverings and social distancing is paramount in curbing this dreadful COVID-19 disease. We need to adopt and adhere to these guidelines that are being given to ensure that we are doing everything to protect our students, as well as our teacher's health, as best as we can.

Adjusting the distance between students' seats to 3 feet is unacceptable. By making this adjustment we are putting all staff and student's health at risk not to mention their families as well. There are many medically fragile students and high-risk staff members in the public-school system. We are not considering everyone's health by trying to adjust the distance between students.

Schools cannot mandate students wear face coverings; however, we can control the distance between students in classrooms and in most common areas around campus. By following the social distancing guidelines that are provided by the CDC, we will help our students and staff to feel somewhat safe during an unsettling time. Please consider what is at stake and the domino effect that can occur. Please honor the contractual agreement that was made to have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Melanie Matsumura-Uyeda

Gmail

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

Providing Testimony- Discussion Item VI(A)- Reopening Schools

Dolores Weidman <d.weidman@seariders.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: repgates@capitol.hawaii.gov, catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Dolores Weidman and I am a school counselor at Waianae High school. I am also a mother to two daughters enrolled in teacher education programs and the primary caretaker for my elderly in law's. I have been at Waianae High since 1990.
I am writing in response to the proposal for opening schools. While I am anxious to get back to my beloved career. I am not anxious about putting my health and the health of those I care for at risk.
The idea that desks are only 3 feet apart and that students are "encouraged but not mandated to wear masks " when we are in a COVID 19 upswing is unhealthy and unfair.
I am pleased the island is opening up to tourists since we are so dependent on them. I am pleased that some of my family members will be returning to work so that I can stop supporting them. I am pleased to be assisting students on campus at least 4 out of 5 days a week .I am pleased to support parents that are already struggling putting themselves at risk as "essential workers" so that I can go grocery shopping, to the doctor's, fix my car, etc.
I would be much more pleased if I knew the Board also cared about my students and their ohana's well being as well as my ohana. **I ask that you not consider allowing students back on campus unless they are 6 feet apart and if unmasked, then at least with a mandatory face shield.**
Teachers, parents and students also need confirmation that bathrooms are supplied with soap and paper towels and that classrooms have sanitizing supplies . I would like to be as brazen as to ask for face shields, daily storage capabilities and cleaning supplies for every Hawaii DOE student.
Thank you.

--
Dolores Weidman
9th grade Counselor
Waianae High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Heidz <sunydayz76@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:33 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 Heidi Salvador, currently a 6th grade teacher at Waipahu Elementary School.
I have been a teacher for 21 years now in the public school system.

I am asking that you please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. We want to provide the safest learning environment possible in these unknown times. Something as simple as keeping 6ft apart should be honored to protect teachers and students as we attempt to return to the classrooms. We become the front lines.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Heidi Salvador

Let's follow the CDC recommendations:

> "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."

http://www.donorschoose.org/misssalvador

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mr Benavitz <mr.benavitz@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:36 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 Micah Benavitz a teacher at Mililani High School and my son attended pre-school at Wahiawa Elementary. As a parent and a teacher I am extremely worried about keeping our keiki and faculty safe in the classroom. Because I live in a multi-generation home I am concerned of either myself or my child getting exposed to COVID-19 in the classroom and spreading it to my household especially since both my parents have pre-existing health condition and could die if exposed to COVID-19. To keep our classrooms safe there should be six-feet spacing for students. It is concerning that there will be no temperature checks when students arrive on campus, and students will not be waring face mask in the classroom since COVID-19 is airborne. I do not want our schools to be a hub for COVID-19 to spread.

Sincerely,

Micah Anjin Benavitz

Gmail

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

Schools reOpening Testimonial

syan Krusa <stephanieroseyan@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the DOE,

There are many complexities that re-opening schools present, and this is an opportunity to raise awareness that many teachers/substitutes are in the high-risk category for COVID-19. Many teachers are fearful and hesitant about reopening the school at the same time that we are reopening to tourists from the mainland with high SARS-COV2 infection prevalence. The issues surrounding school re-openings impact the health and functions of Hawai'i households, especially those that are multi-generational/low-income or rely on Kupuna for after-school childcare. The health of the rest of our communities is also paramount.

Much of the Hawai'i Public seems to be expressing great concern about 2 separate and important issues and that they are occurring simultaneously:

1) Re-opening to Mainland Travel with only ONE voluntary pre-flight test (especially during huge surges in the Mainland), Travel Forms, and Thermal Screening. Thermal Screening is not effective for identifying asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers. These measures alone are insufficient and leave no plan for keeping track and enforcing the quarantine of thousands of tourists who choose to quarantine only.

2) Re-opening Schools with face-to-face contact & optional masking at the same time as we allow travelers into Hawaii from the mainland to opt out of quarantine with pre-flight testing just as surges are happening in many places in the mainland.

We should urge the DOE to require schools to follow The CDC guidelines
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html
as a base with requirements for:

-Modified 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

-open windows and doors or create tented classrooms in open air; Outdoor fresh air vastly reduces the rate of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. It's a cheap, low-tech way to protect our schoolchildren and teachers.

-Mask requirements for teachers and children over the age of 2 years old.

There has been mention that children should not wear masks in class because it interferes with personal interactions and it is unnecessary, as contact tracing can prevent infections from spreading beyond a single classroom. There is no evidence of this in other places that have succeeded in controlling this pandemic. Why are we going to allow the DOH to experiment with our kids, when mask wearing has proven beneficial in many parts of the world successfully fighting this pandemic. We have no idea whether COVID-19 infection in children has any long term sequelae, i.e. Cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) have now been identified in nearly half the nation's states .
Nobody has recovered from COVID-19 for more than 7 months, so we only have 7 months of data on COVID19's long term consequences on kids (even if they are mildly symptomatic from it). COVID-19 is a virus that can affect multiple organs, not just the lungs or the upper respiratory tract. It is extremely dangerous to adopt a policy that guarantees whole classrooms of kids and their teachers at high risk of getting the virus. Masks have to be MANDATORY for all in school over the age of 2 years old based on CDC guidelines.

At the lowest standard, we must follow CDC guidelines and in order to ensure safety for our aging teaching/educator staff population and our kids, we need to follow examples set by places such as South Korea, New Zealand, China , and Taiwan.

Mahalo.
Sincerely,

Dr. Stephanie Yan

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

David Wright <carldavidwrightjr@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: "Leibowitz, Jonathan" <jleibowitz@hsta.org>, JJansen@hsta.org

July 7, 2020

Re: Testimony *for Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year.*

Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

The Department of Education and HSTA began the conversation to re-open schools in a spirit of cooperation and have an existing contractual agreement. The Department of Education is choosing to move forward in violation of this agreement and is risking the lives of teachers, students, school employees, and the families of Hawaii. Please consider the following points as the state moves forward to re-open Hawaii schools.

- I am a high-risk individual because I have a recent broken ankle that is healing. If I catch Covid-19 at school, I will not be able to continue my rehab and heal properly.

- Six feet is the recommended distance from the CDC, and I request that it be followed in all schools.

- Cases are rising in Hawaii, and the schools will serve as a super spreader to families throughout Hawaii, especially to our large elderly population. In

American States and foreign countries, schools have had to be shut down after they reopened. In Texas, staff is contracting the virus at twice the rates of students. Advocating for social and physical distancing avoids the very real possibility of having to close all schools and reduces the threat of the virus.

- There is a high potential that the State of Hawaii could face a class action lawsuit from employees that contract the Coved 19 Virus. 40 percent of our members are in high-risk categories. Not following proper guidelines and violating a contract that was brought forth from a standpoint of employee safety is a solid example of reckless endangerment on behalf of DOE Management.

- As I type this, the Covid Curve is increasing in Hawaii, and by August 4th it could be much worse.

- The coming impact of tourists on August 1st is yet another catalyst of which we have no way of measuring its impact on our current situation that we are beginning to lose control of on a statewide basis.

Again, it is imperative that the State Board of Education conclude that the DOE must follow CDC guidelines and the honor the contractual agreement with HSTA and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. Failure to do so could be a fatal mistake and result in the loss of lives while having permanent lifelong effects on the State of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

David Wright

David Wright, Masters Ed. Leadership / K-12 Adm

10th Grade US History / AP Psychology / HQ SS

Kapolei High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

ugudrum . <ugudrum@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:36 PM

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 Jensen Hirayama. I am a 4th grade Inclusion Classroom teacher at Wheeler Elementary School. My 6 year old son attends Mililani Waena Elementary School.

I do not agree with the policy that allows students to be seated 3 feet apart as long as they are all facing forward. This is not what was agreed upon in the MOU that was signed by HSTA and Superintendent Kishimoto. As of this moment, the State of Hawaii has seen the largest single day count of positive COVID-19 cases: 41. Our State Leadership is discouraging people from gathering in large numbers. Dr. Anthony Fauci said, "Avoid crowds." A classroom is a large number of humans gathering in a crowd on a daily basis in an enclosed space. Our children, our Kupuna and our families are all being set up for a disastrous and deadly wave of illness and death.

I implore the State of Hawaii Board of Education, Department of Education and Superintendent Kishimoto to not only institute a mandatory 6 feet apart rule in the classroom but also mandate that all students wear masks. In addition, please make it very, very clear that proper mask etiquette requires that the person's mouth and nose needs to be covered at all times.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jensen Hirayama

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jade Pham <jadeyimpham@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Jade Pham and I will be a fourth-year Special Education Teacher at Kaimuki High School in Honolulu, 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.

As school reopening nears, the concern for both keiki and teacher health safety grows. Please require a distance of at least six feet between desks in classrooms. My largest class last year was 35 students. It will be very difficult to maintain health standards if students are only three feet apart. In fact, students were already three feet apart in my classroom. Schools are willing to make the necessary accommodations through various models to keep everyone healthy.

I love my students and I look forward to beginning this next school year.

Thank you,

Jade

--
Jade Pham
808-428-4425
jadeyimpham@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Liz Light <lizzardlight@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:38 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 Elizabeth Light, and I work at Jefferson Elementary school as a special education preschool teacher. I have been working through ESY with only two students.

First of all, I just want to say that I understand we are working in an unprecedented and near impossible situation. I know it is impossible for everyone to be happy. Thank you for all of your hard work to keep us safe.

However, I am the Lorax, I speak for the children who cannot speak for themselves. I am here to say that any guideline for social distancing is unrealistic with young children. They do not understand why they can't be near their friends, and can not be expected to be responsible enough to social distance. That being said, putting MORE of these young children into a classroom where there only needs to be 3 feet of space between them all but ensures there will not be any social distancing at all. With 6 feet, you MAY have a small buffer, with 3 feet, nothing. In my experience, young children are like magnets and with only 3 feet required distance, us teachers will be spending half our instructional day reminding children to separate, rather than actually teaching. At ESY, my two students still gravitate toward each other to play, and with two students and two adults, we have the staff resources to keep them apart. How is one kindergarten teacher supposed to do that?

Please also keep in mind that to keep my children apart, it requires me to be within 1 foot of the student, not 3, not 6. I cannot do my job with a 6 foot barrier. I cannot do my job with a 3 foot barrier. I change diapers, and often need to physically intervene to prevent unsafe behaviors in the classroom. I repeat, I cannot do my job while maintaining 6 feet of distance, and I think you would be hard pressed to find any special education teacher who says they can. I do not personally mind having to be within this "unsafe" distance with my students, but I think you should be aware that this is what reality is for us SPED teachers, not everyone staying in a happy 6 foot (or 3 foot) bubble.

My next concern lies with mask requirements. I know for a fact some of my students will not tolerate a mask. Wearing a mask is hot, uncomfortable, and hard to tolerate from a sensory standpoint. Will these students still be allowed to come to school if they cannot wear the mask? Will they be denied recess if masks are only required outside? Please consider every student and all types of learners when discussing this. Children with special needs are going to have a hard time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Liz

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Judith Dahl <teacherjd0109@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:41 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a classroom teacher I will not be working in 3 ft social distancing when the state has mandated 6 ft or two arm lengths, whichever is great. You are putting my life at risk to be teaching in an environment like this. It is too soon to go back and the will not be social distancing either. This is a recipe for a very bad disaster in Hawaii. I am a high risk teacher myself so I'm putting myself in harms way.

Judith Dahl
Mountain View Elementary
Special Education
Teacherjd0109@gmail.com.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Erik Tanaka <isaiahsdaddy808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

1) Ilima admin says that we will be able to do the 6ft in our classes. **However, we need to stand in solidarity to ***support all teachers and students*** across the state by demanding change from the BOE.

2) Your classroom configurations may need to change in order for your room to be able to accommodate seating that is 6 feet apart.
IE. I would imagine that there will be fewer bookshelves etc.

3) From my current understanding, these logistics are being looked at by Custodial and admin staff.

4) Custodians are putting together free-standing and re-positionable "shields" made of PVC Pipe that have a transparent plastic covering to be able to physically separate you from the student. This is on top of having the admin providing clear face shields and masks.

Sincerely
Erik Tanaka
Special Education
Ilima Intermediate School

P.S. Always feel free to reach out to any of your APC members as we can try to problem-solve, especially if you are feeling confused or frustrated about things of this nature. We may not have all the answers, but we will do our best to fact find and provide you with whatever you may need.

Gmail

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

Testimony

KC Ahkey <emaliaahkey@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:42 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 Kelly Cole I have been teaching middle school science on the island of Maui at Maui Waena Intermediate for the last 17 years. I am very concerned about the safety of our students, staff, and community with the current 3 feet distancing and "suggested" mask use. It is not safe or in accordance with what is recommended by the CDC.
Currently, it is my understanding, our school is not offering or able to afford, plexiglass or plastic sheet partitions, face shields for most staff or any students, is only providing one "deep"cleaning per day at the end of the school day. This will be after I have had 6 different student group rotations (with an AB model 15+ students per group) in my classroom. I do not feel safe for myself, my students, or my community.
Our school and community is comprised mostly of multigenerational or multi family living situations. We also have a large ELL population whose family members are medically fragile.
I have been doing a lot of thinking (and crying) and I am not sure if I can return to my position, In a few weeks, in good faith if safer practices are not put into place for my students, community, and myself. Sitting 3 feet apart and “suggested“ mask use is not safe for a middle school classroom especially with out other safety measures we are not being provided.
My daughter was supposed to start her first year of Kindergarten this year at Puukukui Elementary but my husband and I opted to put her in a safer setting at a private school.
Thank you for your time

Gmail

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

Testimony

Leialoha Naeata <leialoha.naeata@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

My name is Leialoha Naeata. I am an Educator at Kahuku High School. My daughters attend Laie Elementary (3rd grade) and Kahuku High School (grade 11). I am worried that the BOE is focused too much on meeting numbers and deadlines, rather than the safety of myself (as the educator) and my daughters. I love teaching and I would do anything for my students, BUT I'm not willing to expose myself to the possibility of getting infected.

Leialoha Naeata

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

Testimony

Karin Miyasato <karinmiyasato@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:44 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.

The 6 feet social distancing requirement for all public places and businesses have been mandated by the Department of Health because it helps to deter the spread of the covid19 virus.
The number of cases has been increasing recently as these places have been opening up. Also, it's been reported by the state health director, Bruce Anderson, that the increase in cases has been predominantly due to people not heeding to social distancing rules and wearing masks.

Additionally, the risk of contracting the virus is more likely in an enclosed place and increases the longer one stays in that place. It is imperative that the 6 ft. social distancing be mandated in the classrooms, as well, since it is already a rule in public settings. Teachers and students spend six hours in the classroom everyday so that already puts them in the higher risk of spread.

I agree that schools should re-open in order to provide the education for our children's growth and learning, but at the same time, it cannot be at the expense of our keiki's health and safety, let alone the teachers and other support staff that work closely with them.

Please reconsider to change the 3 feet social distancing in the classroom to the 6 feet ruling according to the CDC guidelines. Thank you for your support and consideration in seeing that our schools provide the best, safe environment for our children!

Karin Miyasato
4th grade Teacher
Likelike Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

Andy Yamamoto <yama96782@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:46 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.”

My name is Andrew Yamamoto, and I am a 5th grade teacher at Ewa Elementary School. First of all, thank you for all of your effort on behalf of the students here in Hawaii.

I have mixed thoughts and emotions as I anticipate the new school year. On one hand, I look forward to seeing my new students this fall. On the other, I have serious concerns about the safety of myself, my colleagues, the students, and the families that we will go home to at the end of each day. We are learning more and more every day, and it seems that with Covid being transmitted via aerosol particles, a classroom with students 3 feet apart will not provide adequate distance to minimize the spread of the virus. Of course, 6 feet doesn’t guarantee anything either, but I feel like that is more acceptable than having the students a mere 3 feet apart.

Please reconsider the distancing policy and have 6 feet be the minimum distance between student desks. I understand there are no great solutions, and that every decision comes with a cost. However, by mandating stricter policies now, I believe that in the long run public education in Hawaii will be in a much healthier place more quickly than if we are too lax now. Thank you for hearing me out.

Sincerely,

Andrew Yamamoto

Gmail

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

Testimony

Laureen Kawai <lmkawai123@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:49 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 2020-2021 School Year.
My name is Laureen Kaliloa and I've been teaching for 25 years. I currently teach Kindergarten at Barbers Point Elementary School. I am concerned about the 3 feet distancing. As a Kindergarten teacher I know from experience that 5 and 6 year olds will have a difficult time keeping 3 feet from each other as well as 6 feet. Kindergarteners like to talk to and touch each other and I feel that they would spread germs easily at 3 feet distancing. Kindergarteners also spit when they talk so they should be required to wear a mask. If the Covid-19 numbers continue to rise, I don't feel that the schools should even open up until the numbers are low or controlled. If one student is tested positive, it would spread very quickly among the other students and faculty members and their families as well. Therefore, if the schools do reopen, students should be required to do 6 feet distancing and wear masks. If the Covid-19 numbers continue to rise, schools should not reopen and all students should be doing distance learning. Thank you for your consideration.

Sent from my iPhone

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

BOE meeting 7/9/20

Ebony Williams <ebony.williams@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:50 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Concerns:
• Office staff being asked to watch classrooms while the teachers have duty free lunch
• Office staff being asked to cover the health room or watch sick students
• Office staff being asked to make packets
• My schools last office meeting was August 2019. We have not had a meeting yet. No Covid meeting or updates, office can't input suggestions or ask questions. No PPE and we are using expired hand sanitizer.
• More than 10 people in the office.
• teachers coming behind counter in office
• all correspondence should be through email. No text or 3rd party apps
• GE students (excluding students of DOE employees) should remain in their designated home school to prevent community spread.
• Do I have to be apart of HGEA? They don't do anything and I have to pay for the service?

Suggestions:
• SASA should have monthly meeting with office staff so we can get updates and express concerns.
• 2 account clerks should be moved out of office so the social distancing rules are followed. Account clerks do not deal with parents or students and can be housed somewhere else on campus.
• Alternative route to the healthroom. Parents and sick students should enter and leave from another door and not come through the office.
• No birthday celebrations, classroom parties. Parents should not bring cupcakes and food for birthday celebrations. No food deliveries for staff.
• As a employee and parent of Hawaii Doe I feel where the DOE fails is not having a uniformed policy that is followed by every school. Every school should have the same rules. Having admin make the rules for each individual school is confusing. One school has a certain set a rules and the school next to them has different rules. Parents transfer their kids between schools and are unaware of procedures. Example: how can one school be proactive against school lunch loans but another school is relaxed on policy? How can you ask for testimony for employees when they work at different schools with different procedures?
• HGEA sends notices for testimony too late. The meeting is in 2 days and you want testimony 24 hours before the meeting starts.

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

Testimony Article (IV) A

Tanya Ashimine <queentash@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:51 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE members,

I have been a science teacher at Kaiser High for 28 years. I implore you to require the 6 ft social distancing rule in classrooms. If you have ever had, or known a child fairly well, I would like you to think back. When have they have ever been able to sit still and forward for 80 minutes? (Screens in front of their face don't count.) My son is a junior and he can last about 10 minutes max. To say that the kids will be facing forward at 3 ft is unrealistic and dangerous.

Where did this idea even come from? Nowhere in any guideline have I read such a thing.
Teachers are already afraid for their safety and health. Many of our students have not been distancing. We have seen them at the shopping centers, beaches and skate parks. We are afraid at 6 feet. 3' is terrifying and goes against all that we have heard from the news since distancing has been known to help prevent the spread of COVID 19.

The numbers of young people catching the virus have risen alarmingly over the last month. And especially the last few weeks. Their death rates are increasing also. I do not want my son only 3ft from others, it is simply not worth the risk. The contract agreement (MOU) was for 6ft, except in rare instances (i.e. FSC students). Why are you going against all that we have been taught and your own agreement?

Please keep the distance at 6ft. And require masks, except in very special circumstances. The students' masks protect other students and their teachers. Put yourselves in our place.

Teachers already have a lot of hard work ahead of us adjusting to these new teaching parameters. Don't add more stress to parents, students, teachers and their families.

Consider the consequences of teachers and students getting sick because of your ruling. What will happen to our system when teachers start having to quarantine, go to the hospital, or die? We couldn't get teachers into the profession before this; we are not easy to replace. What will happen to the families of those students who bring the virus home to their parents/kupuna?

Please 6 feet minimum! Masks for all!

Sincerely,
Tanya Ashimine

Gmail

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

Testimony

Justine Malek <justinenmalek@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:52 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.

I am a special education teacher at Kula Elementary School. I have worked with students in 3rd and 4th grade in the past. This coming year I will be working with 1st and 2nd graders.

Based upon CDC and medical guidelines all people should follow a 6 foot distance for safety of everybody involved. It baffles me that my second job (a server at a restaurant) has more clear and safer guidelines than you are proposing to provide to our students (partially due to the fact that when the mandate comes down from the highest levels they do not get contradicted)! The children that we are working with are quite literally the future of our country and to not mandate a SAFE and supportive learning environment is WRONG!

Since being at Kula Elementary school I have seen how if a firm requirement is not expressed from the top level, all lower levels will make their own requirements based on their own personal beliefs. By contradicting the HSTA's MOU you are creating discord at all school levels. PLEASE help us as teachers hold our schools accountable to maximize and maintain student safety.

If we allow our schools to have sub-standard protection we are saying that our children are not worth the effort to protect. While it is true that it will be difficult to maintain a 6 foot distance with all students it is a necessary requirement. We as a profession figured out how to turn over to online learning in less than 2 weeks and kept our families engaged in their children's learning. We will be able to work out a way to maintain a SAFE 6 foot distance if that is the requirement we are given, and we MUST BE GIVEN THIS REQUIREMENT.

Please hold us all to a higher standard and expect us to figure out how to make it work, just as we teachers do daily for our students. Help us all keep teachers and students safe every day. We can hold ourselves to a high standard and we want this high standard because we know that we can meet it! Thank you for keeping our future safe.

--
Mahalo,
Justine Malek
Kula Elementary School
Special Education

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristen Kimura <akikohoku@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:52 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kristen Kimura and I am a teacher at Washington Middle School as well as a mother of a six year old student at University Laboratory School and a one year old child at home. I am emailing 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.

Going back to school is already so uncertain and scary during this time. Teachers are not sure if we will have the ability clean properly or have the supplies we need to maintain a safe environment. Plus, we will be returning to school with non-medical grade PPE. We do not have the space on campus to run all of our classes outside where it could potentially be safer for ourselves and our children. And I've heard that parents are not necessarily being given the option to choose full distance learning to protect their children. Being indoors creates a higher risk of exposure, especially for long periods of time, and with a mixed population of over 100 people crossing paths throughout the day.

There has been research that shows that COVID is airborne and can be transmitted well over six feet. Other schools that have tried reopening with a six foot distance have already been shut down because it was not enough to keep the children safe. Other institutions that were comprised of adults who are better equity to self-manage themselves were not even able to prevent the spread of the disease. Asking our children to be aware of their actions and surroundings is already going to be difficult enough. Lessing the space between them will only increase their chances of falling ill.

Please don't use our children to test this three foot theory.

Get Outlook for iOS

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kathleen Booth <kathleenbooth4@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kathleen Booth and I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening schools for 2020-2021 School Year.

I am a first grade teacher at Connections Public Charter School and I feel we should all be following the CDC's recommended 6 foot social distancing rule at all times in school. I also think this will be very difficult for children and therefore feel they should all be wearing a face shield while in school. This will be a constant reminder to them that they are responsible for trying to keep themselves and others healthy. When my son was two and a half years old, he had to begin wearing glasses. This was a struggle at first, but he learned very quickly to not only wear his glasses but to care for them as well. At the age of eight, he had to wear a headgear all day to help his braces move his teeth correctly. This made him miserable for a few days but then he realized this was what he had to do.

Our students can do what needs to be done. A face shield allows us to see them and still hear them. And some type of face covering is required everywhere else in the state. Why wouldn't we require it in school? They help limit the spread of Covid-19.

Thank you,

Mrs. Booth

Virus-free. www.avg.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Holly Mizuno <hollymizuno@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:57 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Name: Holly Sumida (3rd Grade Teacher)
Workplace: Connections PCS
School where my Children Attend: Waiakea Elementary School

Aloha,

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. Numerous children are being cared for by their kupuna. More precautions should be in place to protect them. I am in disbelief on the decisions that are being made regarding the reopening of our schools. Think about the elderly and people who could get affected by the virus because of various health issues they have!

I am also concerned about the air conditioning units in classrooms and the classrooms that have no windows. The virus could be recirculating in the classroom environment if students are not wearing masks. Thank you for your attention.

Mahalo,
Holly Sumida

Gmail

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

Testimony

C Kapu <ckahpooh@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:57 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

I am a parent first and a teacher at heart.
It seems that there is a lack of accountability to provide a decision on the distance needed to keep our community safe. Whether the anxiety stems from a parent who may sue if their child contracts or spreads COVID 19 from exposure in a classroom, or at school, even if guidelines were strictly followed; or backlash from a union, department or board! Think, what is the right thing to do? What is the safest thing to do? What would be the worst case scenario?
Spacing will help with keeping most students, teachers, parents and families healthy. But this also determines the model the schools will need to implement. This affects our community! Then the real work happens! Planning! Physically moving of items, from desks, shelving and other furniture. Training will be necessary for the new protocols in and out of the classrooms! Childcare arrangements for every and any parent and family of school-aged children. And most importantly and most rare: time; time to adjust, modify and revise as we simultaneously plan and execute! (Like carving a canoe while navigating.)
In your mind, think...what if my child, daughter, son, wife, husband, spouse, went to work and brought back COVID 19 into your home? What safety measures would you want in place? Would you be alright sitting and working 3ft or 6ft away from a possible COVID 19 case for 4 hours or more?
We are all accountable! Hold each other to that so we can eventually hold each other again!

Together be kind to keep safe and healthy!

Sincerely,
C. Kapu

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sherrie Faildo-Lee <faildos@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Sherrie Faildo-Lee. I work at Moanalua High School. My sons attend Salt Lake Elementary and Moanalua Middle School. 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 FEEL SAFE returning to work should the guidelines be for students to be spaced as little as 3 feet apart. I also do not feel safe returning to work if not all students and teachers are required to wear masks in and outside of the classroom. I do not feel safe that they are expected to return to their school environment with the above mentioned guidelines. I am AGAINST returning to work and sending my children to school if these guidelines do not change. We must have at least 6 feet distance between students and EVERYONE must wear MASKS IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM!
The number of positive cases are rising. You are putting myself, my coworkers and my family in a dangerous situation. I have elderly parents whom I live with and my husband recently suffered a massive heart attack. He and my parents are all part of the vulnerable population. Please make a change!!

Gmail

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

Testimony

Erinn Kawamura <erinn808@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 3:59 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 Erinn Kawamura and I have been a school counselor in the DOE since 2002 at Aiea Intermediate School. My son attends Moanalua High and my daughter attends Hookele Elem.

Please support the 6’ guideline in our schools.
Mahalo.

Sent by Erinn

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

Malia Beaver <malia.beaver@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:00 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: 10081126@k12.hi.us, Debra.Yamakawa@k12.hi.us

Subject: 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 Beaver and I am a secondary teacher at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School.

I object to schools reopening without a comprehensive COVID-19 protective plan for SY 2020-2021 as doing so is DANGEROUS to the health of everyone on school campus.

I have a granddaughter who is vulnerable and at risk. She has a respiratory problem that manifests within seconds to an emergency/hospitalization situation when she gets an attack. If she gets the COVID-19, it will be a life and death situation for her.

Vulnerable at Risk: I have colleagues who are either in their 60s, or have medical conditions i.e. diabetes, ALS, etc. who will also be at risk. I have students who are diabetic, or have lupus, leukemia or asthmatic and are vulnerable at risk individuals.

COVID-19 TESTED POSITIVE STUDENTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Since the opening of beaches, I have learned of students and families in Nanakuli who have tested positive for COVID-19. I am not confident that all infected will be reported to school faculty. No reports have been received from school to date and I personally know of cases existing in Nanakuli and Waianae Coast.

SOCIAL DISTANCING/DISINFECTING: Schools plan to reopen with only 3 feet distance in classrooms and only supplied us with 1 hand sanitizer dispenser and 1 container of disinfectant wipe. No masks, gloves, and/or shields for respiratory/asthmatic have been supplied for teachers and students. There is no DOE directive that makes these PPE supplies mandatory. At this time, Students and teachers, staff and administrators are not required to wear masks and/or shields.

There is no plan for social distancing when more than 10 students will be entering buildings to report to classes, switching classes and buildings during transitions. Additionally, custodial budgets need to be increased per school because there are not enough custodians to clean each classroom after each class ends and a new class begins.

Some schools only plan to disinfect classrooms and buildings once a week because of not having enough custodians.

Additionally, how is the school expected to enforce social distancing during recess breaks and how will schools be expected to enforce and control such.

I ask that BOE not approve of school reopening until the above concerns are met within the CDC and WHO guidelines and that an official written comprehensive plan is provided to faculty that meet the safety criteria described above. Long Distance Virtual Learning should continue until such measures are in place and a sufficient increase in school budgets are provided so that the schools may meet these needs.

This is a pandemic and is a matter of life and death. At this time, anyone can become infected and not only the vulnerable can die.

Thank you.
Malia Beaver
NHIS

Gmail

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

Testimony

Dari Ann Matsuda <dari_ann.matsuda@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon,

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 Dari Ann Matsuda and I am speaking as a teacher and parent. I teach fourth grade at Manana Elementary School and my child attends a middle school in the Leeward District.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the 3-feet distancing expectations supported by the Department of Health and the Department of Education. Three feet is not enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other, and with it, I think students would easily reach across and touch the person next to them.

The CDC recommends 6 feet social distancing in public areas. Why should it be different in schools? If adults find it hard to abide by the 6 feet rule, how can we expect children to follow shorter social distancing guidelines put forth by the DOH and DOE? If students think 3 feet is safe in school, then they may start thinking it is safe to do so in public.

Lastly, I am concerned about face masks being optional. I understand that it is something that children are not used to, but we have to consider the health and safety of everyone. Teachers already need to remind children to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, so requiring masks would make this situation more manageable and less risky for everyone.

We all want what's best for our keiki and have them return to school, but their safety is our utmost priority.

Thank you,
Dari Ann Matsuda

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Testimony

Kristin Tokunaga <kristin.tokunaga@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:02 PM
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 Kristin Tokunaga and I am speaking as a teacher caring for high risk kupuna. I teach at Manana Elementary School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the 3 feet distancing expectations supported by the DOE and DOH. Three feet is not enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other, and with it, I think they will still be able to reach across and touch the person next to them.

The CDC recommends 6 feet social distancing in other public areas around the island so why should it be different in schools? If even adults find it hard to abide by the 6 ft. rule, how can we expect children to follow shorter distancing guidelines? Also, If students think 3 ft. distancing is safe in school, then they may start thinking it is allowed outside of school as well.

Lastly, I am concerned about fask masks being optional to wear in school. I understand wearing masks can be uncomfortable (I have a family member working in the health field that tells me this all the time) and something children are not used to doing on a daily basis, but the health and safety of all school personnel is important. Teachers already need to remind students to cover their mouth when they sneeze or cough, so requiring masks would make the situation more manageable and less risky for everyone.

We all want our keiki to return to school, but their safety is our utmost priority.

Thank you,

Kristin Tokunaga
Manana Elementary School
1147 Kumano Street
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782
Telephone: (808) 307-5300
Fax: (808) 453-6437

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testimony for BOE

John Goto <john.goto@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have over 30 years and care for my father and family members and feel that without masks and other precautions being taken at the schools, I and my family and the students' families will be at risk. I feel we need to teach and get the students back, but there has to be a compromise between social distancing and 3 feet and no masks.

Thank you
John Goto

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

Testimony

Jamie Chang <jschang55@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:05 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jamie Goodin. I am a special education teacher at Mililani Mauka Elementary school currently teaching in an inclusion classroom. I have a three year old and 10 month old.

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

I strongly feel that we need to focus on the safety of everyone right now. Currently, there has been a rise in Covid cases, 41 new cases on Oahu today. It is not acceptable that schools be able to reopen and space students out 3 feet apart.

As a mother, my family comes first. I no longer feel comfortable nor safe with sending my children to a sitter/ preschool. My mom has become their caregiver and teacher, and she is the only one my family has to help with childcare. I still get emotional about it because I don't know what my family would do if something happened to her. My husband and I need to do everything in our power to keep ourselves healthy so that we do not risk the safety of our young children as well as my mother who are high-risk.

As a second grade inclusion teacher, yes I want you to be with all my students every day like how it was before. However, it's also our responsibility to make sure we are protecting the safety of our students and families who also have little ones at home and grandparents who help out and are high risk. With everything happening in the news and Covid cases currently on the rise, my question is WHY are we choosing to relax our safety guidelines and just reopen schools with a flexible 3-6ft social distancing? Don't we want to reassure our teachers in the front line and parents that we are being as safe and cautious as possible to provide the best we can at this time to our students and families?? Please reconsider making it a requirement of schools putting safe and secure plans in place for reopening the 2020-2021 school year. We need to be 6 feet apart with masks on. We need to focus on safety for all above anything.

Thank you for your time.

Jamie Goodin

Gmail

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

NO to 3-feet apart

Kelly Rickard <kelsnbran@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing you today to express my deepest concern with regards to having my children and all of our keiki of Hawai'i return to school with only being distanced at 3 feet is greatly concerning. With the amount of cases continuously rising, why wouldn't the board of education and department of education take social distancing more seriously?

Our business and citizens of this state are mandated and highly encouraged to social distance, wear masks and temperature checks, but not our schools... How does this make any sense?

I urge and beg you to take our children's health our teacher's health and faculties health seriously. The health director,Mr. Andersson has shown is these past couple of months that his decisions are unreliable, let us learn from his mistakes to prevent a tragedy from happening.

Kelly Rickard
Mother of 3

Testimony

janelle P <jsettsu@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:06 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 Janelle Perreira and I have been in the education field for about 5 years now. I work at Makalapa Elementary School as a 3rd grade teacher and have 3 children who also attend public school (Kanoelani Elem, Moanalua Middle, and Aliamanu Middle.)

Having taught Kinder, 3rd, and 6th grade I have been on the front lines with the children. Even without COVID-19 students would still get sick although every surface was wiped down and things weren't shared. As much as I would love yo have my students back altogether at this time everyone's SAFETY should be our top priority!

Our classroom is designed as an open pod. 4 rooms divided by 2 3/4walls. Placing students 3 feet apart would do nothing to distance students from touching each other/sharing school supplies. Even an unexpected sneeze would hit 4-6 people around them, since masks are "optional".

I am not a fan of wearing a mask, but I do it when I go out to protect my family. I do it to protect my 90 year old+ grandparents that I buy groceries for. I wear a mask because I want to protect my elderly father-in-law and 1.5 year old baby that lives with us. I am willing to do it for my students to keep them and their families safe.

As we reopen our Hawai'i I've noticed people who think it'll never happen to them so they just "do whatever". As our numbers rise, I fear school will close again. Some students NEED to be in school, having all of them again would be a blessing.

I know I am only 1 teacher, 1 parent, and a graduate of a public school... but please remember I didn't choose teaching because it was easy. I did however choose teaching because I believed in my heart we could INSPIRE our students to be the best people they can be.

Please help keep all of us safe. Teachers, students, parents, and our community.

Wear a mask, minimum 6 feet away.

Mahalo,
Janelle Perreira

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Russell Ogata <russellogata@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:06 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Leilani Johnson <johnsonleilanisky@gmail.com>

I would like to submit my concerns for the 3 ft social distancing facing one way.

Allowing for more people in a room 3 ft apart would be subjecting the student and teacher to more risks of infection due to their close proximity. With options of distance/online learning available, and the incidents of infection rising , lessening the protective measures seem counter productive. Wanting to start school up but lessening the protection from the cause of this pandemic would provide for the long term failure of this education effort.

As a Teacher and parent, I would not want my child or myself to to be within an enclosed room and expedite the spread of the virus multiplied by 5 classes for 2 face to face meetings a week on a proposed hybrid schedule. If you teach 7-8 like I do, that expands the exposure to 4 days a week face to face. The challenges of online education are greater for elective classes that focus on physical performance. Maintaining a safe distance while delivering an educational product with substance has it's concerns and difficulties. I would work that situation with a clearer conscience than one that allows for closer proximity and more potential exposure and virus transmission.

We have a schedule down and the CDC guidelines for distance and disinfection. I hope that we can supply and comply with them to truly continue to educate our keiki while keeping them as safe as possible during their time with us.

The re-opening of our economy and the normalization of our lives have brought in the need for more personal and social responsibility. Let our school be the model and leader in that too.

Thank You,

Russell Ogata
Highlands Intermediate School
Physical Education

Testimony

Daniella Reyes <daniella.reyes@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Daniella Reyes and I am a teacher at Mililani 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 am against the three-foot rule. Transmission can still occur at a distance of 6 ft, which is the minimum distance advised by the CDC. When students and teachers are not required to wear masks, this increases the risk of transmission exponentially.

I live in a multi-generational household where I and several members of my family are considered "high-risk". When I am fearing for my life and the lives of my family members, I cannot guarantee that I will be the most effective teacher for my students, and they deserve access to the best education possible. Students also deserve to feel safe when they come to school, and sitting three feet apart with no one in the classroom required to wear masks is the opposite of safe. If students have access to technology and all content is going to be based in google classroom, there is no point in going back to school and putting others at risk.

I, my family, and my fellow teachers do not want to go back to normal. This is not the new normal. Preventable deaths and hospitalizations are not and never will be normal. I understand that there are difficult decisions to be made for the upcoming school year, but I would hope that our leaders prioritize community health and safety over everything else.

Sincerely,
Daniella Reyes
ELA teacher
Mililani High School

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Testimony

kristy arakawa <kilihune007@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:09 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 public school DOE teacher in Hawaii. Although I don't have children of my own, I do have nieces and nephews who attend public school. It is of vital importance that ALL students as well as faculty and staff wear face masks and/or shields for the protection and public safety of all. I cannot imagine the risk we would be putting ourselves in if face coverings are not mandatory for ALL to wear. It is unfathomable to think that only teachers are required to wear a covering but NOT students. How can that be safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Imagine if we had to close schools again and go to strictly distance learning if the conditions at school are not safe. I wouldn't want to put myself nor family members nor others at risk.

Please reconsider the wording in the MOU making face coverings and 6 feet required CDC social distancing guidelines and revise the re-opening of the school year policy to ensure public safety for all. Our keiki deserve it. Teachers also deserve it. I would be very upset should we see a spike in COVID-19 cases due to unsafe working conditions. Again, I am asking that the Board of Education of Hawaii take a closer look at the guidelines and take a firm stand on face coverings for ALL students to wear and to ensure 6 feet of social distancing.

Me Ke Aloha,

Kristy Arakawa
91-960 Iwikuamoo Street #1003
Ewa Beach Hawaii 96706
(808) 779524

Aloha, July 7, 2020

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 Grant Takiguchi and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Radford High School and my children attend Mililani ‘Ike 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 26 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 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 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,

Grant Takiguchi
Radford High School

BOARD OF EDUCATION

GENERAL BUSINESS MEET

TESTIMONY: SUSAN A. PCOLA-DAVIS

DATE OF MEETING: JULY 9, 2020

Please accept my testimony regarding the

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

It may be lengthy, but **it is more than about the physical distancing of 3 feet vice 6 feet**.

My main point is that the decision to open the schools was primarily to open tourism and bring back our economy. To bring back the economy, parents and teachers need to return to work. This will stop the draining of the Unemployment benefits.

The Superintendent did testify at the Senate Covid19 Special Committee. These presentations were vague and without details. At no time did she mention who her collaborators were. She talked of a tri-level leadership team between herself, complex superintendents, and principals. It appears it was developed in a vacuum.

If input were derived from the results of that summer survey, then the data source is biased based on the wording of the questions. Publicly disclosed results are only from Intermediate and High School population. There is no report yet for Elementary. I ask, why not. Again, the data is skewed. Making decisions before all data was publicized and consecrating the plan was irresponsible.

The guidebook was not well thought out and was fast tracked just to

The underlying message is if you do not like it then "HOMESCHOOL." Use the DOE website for guidance for homeschooling.

There is so much more to this.

TOPIC	PROBLEM	COMMENTS
SCHOOL OPENING PLANS, BOARD OF EDUCATION AND FUNDING Board of Education Before we can issue guidance, however, the board needs to first understand the expectations,	1. The Superintendent is vague. 2. Disregard of the **Board of Education's** resolution in order for the Board to provide "big picture" guidance to the Department of Education, of its expectations for the	1. The need for awareness of the trauma that students are experiencing. 2. First few weeks of school and the importance of monitoring how students are doing. 3. Ask the legislature for funding.

questions, and concerns that its members, education stakeholders, and the public have about reopening schools and providing a quality education for students while living with the threat of covid-19.	reopening of public schools in the 2020-2021 school year. 3. Public-facing handbook was taken off the website after the 1st day of posting and replaced with summaries. Put the public document back up on website. 4. Trauma informed care needs to be made available and discussed openly. 5. The department would have a better chance advocating for and receiving additional funds if it were to provide the legislature with specific amounts that it would need for all of its options. 6. INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS CHANGING CLASSES AND CLASSROOM	4. Make public how all the CARES funding was spent. Itemize for transparency. 5. **Intermediate schools.** Instead of using the schedule of changing classes all day long and seeing 80-100 students come into the classroom, keep only our advisory students for the first 6 weeks.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
COMMUNICATIONS	1. Methods not family friendly: too much emphasis on usual methods that do not always work	1. On its public website, intranet and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn). 2. There will be situations where important and urgent messages are communicated through traditional media including news stations, newspapers and radio.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
MODELS In selecting a model, schools should consider the impact on school operations, such as bus transportation and the delivery of meals to all students, the impact on personnel, and the delivery	1. No family involvement 2. Each school should have a comprehensive distance learning plan as a safety net.	1. Decisions based on the summer survey regarding distance learning. Fraught with so many issues, surveys were answered based on experiences during the school closure.

of non-academic learning activities such as social emotional learning.		Many distance learning issues can be resolved, therefore, making that method feasible.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
DISTANCE LEARNING	1. The department is in the process of looking at a k-5 virtual solution.	1. While in-school, face-to-face instruction is preferred, there may be situations in which parents may choose virtual learning only. 2. K-5 is not ready for a virtual solution. 3. Ready to offer courses for Grades 6-12. 3. DOE still is not ready for total distance learning. 4. Once a parent selects a virtual-only option, the parent commits to this selection for the entire length specified in order to earn the credit or grade.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
COMMON SYSTEMS • Google provides applications such as Gmail and Google Meets that can be used for delivery of learning content via email or e-conferencing. With the increased use of online tools due to telework and distance learning, the technology team monitors the availability of Google and of any nationwide or geographic area outages that may impact users. •Webex: HIDOE uses Webex as its primary e-conferencing application, which can be used for online meetings and delivery of online learning	1. Distance learning is not ready for upper elementary students. 2. The forthcoming ‘ohana help desk will provide support to parents and students.	These are our enterprise-wide systems in place: 1. Google (Enterprise G-Suite) 2. Webex 3. Infinite Campus 4. All HIDOE employees have a district issued Gmail account, which will be used to communicate.

content. With the increased use of online tools due to telework and distance learning, the technology team monitors the availability of Webex and of any nationwide or geographic area outages that may impact users and interrupt online meetings and classes. • Infinite Campus: HIDOE uses Infinite Campus as its system of record for student information, including registration and enrollment. •In some cases, schools may opt to use alternative systems for video conferencing than the Department-wide Google Meet and Webex. 1. Many schools use specific curricular tools to support their school design. 2. If a parent has questions about school-specific tools, they may contact the school directly. 3. HIDOE-wide systems are supported by the IT Help Desk for employees. 4. The forthcoming ‘Ohana Help Desk will provide support to parents and students.		

TOPIC	PROBLEM	COMMENTS
HEALTH AND SAFETY SCREENING FOR POTENTIAL ILLNESS 1. Schools shall screen employees, students and visitors for overt signs of illness in a safe and respectful manner. The purpose of screening would be for general symptoms of illness. 2. If any of these symptoms are present, the person should be sent home immediately.	1. No use of forehead thermometers; yet incoming tourists through the airport are getting their temperatures screened.	1. Any designated adult can perform the screening. 2. Upon arrival, interview and visually inspect all individuals (from at least 6 feet away) using the following symptom checklist: ❑ feverish or unusually warm (has flushed cheeks) ❑ coughing/sneezing ❑ sore throat ❑ shortness of breath/difficulty breathing ❑ headache/stomach ache/nausea ❑ muscle pain/unusual fatigue ❑ new loss of taste or smell
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
WEAR A FACE COVERING OR MASK 1. In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask. 2. Face coverings for adults and students must be worn when outside the classroom (e.g., moving from class to class, to an office, the library, or locker room) especially when physical distancing is difficult. 3. The Department of Health does not advise having students wear masks while playing at recess since wearing masks may be dangerous on the playground.	1. In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask. How will maintenance of masks be monitored? 2. Inconsistency to the extent possible or when within three feet of a student or other staff member, adults must wear a mask. 3. Staff are responsible to bring and properly maintain ?? their own masks. 4. How will students be responsible to bring and properly maintain their own masks? Parents/legal guardians will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks.	1. Face coverings for adults and students must be worn when outside the classroom (e.g., moving from class to class, to an office, the library, or locker room) especially when physical distancing is difficult. Exceptions for face coverings/masks apply to those for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical condition, or other considerations. 2. Parents/legal guardians will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks.

4. It is advised to keep the classes in cohorts when using the playground.	5. 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 think there is something wrong with this wording because masks should be worn when keeping six feet apart is not possible, or when children face each other and interact in similar ways.	

TOPIC	PROBLEM	COMMENTS
VENTILATION 1. If a room has an air conditioner, the current recommendation is to open doors for ventilation when it is feasible to keep the air conditioner turned off. 2. Keep doors closed while the air conditioner is running. What about filters? 3. Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air. *4. Open windows and doors when possible. 5. If a room has an air conditioner, the current recommendation is to open doors for ventilation when it is feasible to keep the air conditioner turned off. 6. Keep doors closed while the air conditioner is running.	1. Is the school responsible for determining the use of AC?	1. We are starting school during the hottest season for Hawaii. 2. Classrooms with AC should be able to use them.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING 1. Keeping six feet apart in the school setting is not always feasible. Practice proper social distancing by maintaining a six-foot distance to the extent possible. 2. Maintain a distance of at least three feet between seats, including group tables, if students are facing the same direction. At least six feet of distance should be maintained if students are seated facing each other.	1. No actual requirement…to the extent possible, not always feasible, at least 3 feet not 6 feet, install physical barriers (flexible plastic, shower curtains)	1. Establish clear policies for student entry and dismissal from campus that ensure physical distance between individuals. 2. Consider staggering drop-off and arrival times for students, so that large groups of people are not arriving and leaving at the same time to minimize overcrowding and human contact in confined areas. 3. For younger children, minimize those times in the classroom when instruction or social skill development activities make it difficult to

3. Install physical barriers (e.g., shower curtain or flexible partitions) in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least six feet apart.		maintain six feet between students, especially when teaching or practicing necessary social skills of personal space, sharing space, and safety.

TOPIC	PROBLEM	COMMENTS
CLEANING AND DISINFECTING 1. Minimize the sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. 2. Have a cleaning schedule for any equipment, materials and assistive devices that must be shared. 3. Each student's belongings should be separated from others'; kept in individually-labeled containers, cubbies, or areas; and taken home each day to be cleaned, if possible. 4. Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible or limit the use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between each use. 5. Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.	1. Limit the use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between each use. 2. Outdoor areas, like playgrounds in schools, generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection, it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19. Who says? 3. What is meant by multiple times a day; 2x, 3x, 4x?	1. Who is cleaning? What is the cleaning schedule? 2. Principals, with Head Custodians, should develop a daily schedule for the Custodial Staff to disinfect school hardware. High touch surfaces should be cleaned multiple times throughout the day with special attention given to key locations. 3. Disinfection of school hardware and multiple cleaning of high touch surfaces multiple times throughout the day.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
FOOD: MEAL TIMES 1. If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing of foods and utensils. 2. During meal times, individually-plated meals are to be consumed in classrooms, at designated outdoor locations, or in the dining hall/cafeteria with distancing precautions.	1. Food delivery	1.

TOPIC	PROBLEM	COMMENTS
ATTENDANCE 1. To satisfy the requirements of state law (HRS §302A-1132), schools shall take daily student attendance. School attendance procedures shall support varying school designs and learning opportunities, including in-person, online and blended instruction. 2. Two options for recording attendance in HIDOE's student information system have been provided for complex area leadership to review and select one option for the complex area. 3. Schools using Infinite Campus (IC) shall take daily attendance and enter it into the system. 4. The module to enter information, either IC Attendance Module or Attendance Assignment in IC Gradebook, shall be determined by the Complex Area Superintendent for their respective complex areas.	1. School attendance procedures shall support varying school designs and learning opportunities, including in-person, online and blended instruction. 2. Will the DOE consider adjustments in attendance policies that determine whether a child is attending school in accordance with the compulsory attendance law, Hawaii revised statutes, section 302a-1132? 3. For accountability purposes (Strive HI)?	1. Parents should reach out to their child's teacher if they are unsure of how attendance is being taken. 2. Parents are important partners with us in ensuring students are attending daily.
TOPIC	**PROBLEM**	**COMMENTS**
LEARNING ASSESSMENTS IN THE FIRST 2 WEEKS 1. During the first two weeks of SY 2020-21, schools will assess all students from kindergarten through grade 12 to determine the students' readiness to meet the curricular standards of their current grade level. 2. Schools may implement one of two options.	1. Returning students will need to have social emotional focus before assessments are conducted. Their needs for comfort and understanding should take precedence. 2. Change to first 3 weeks, with the first week focusing only on social and emotional needs.	1. The pre-assessments will be used as an initial diagnostic to establish baseline instructional goals and personalization. 2. Grade-levels and departments will administer 5-10 formative assessments for each summative assessment to be used to

One option is for schools to utilize the Hawaii Multi-Tiered System of Support (HMTSS) to screen students to identify targeted needs. Schools will monitor student progress to inform instructional design for intervention and differentiation. (Please see our HIDOE link to HMTSS guide for best practices and considerations for student supports.) 3. The other option is for schools to administer school-developed tests to assess student needs. All grade-levels and course departments will begin their formative assessment cycle during the first two weeks of school. The school-developed pre-tests will be aligned to the Hawaii Common Core. 4. Repurposing the standardized assessments that would have occurred in Spring into diagnostic assessments for back to school due to school closure and loss of 4th quarter. 5. Consider opportunities to experiment with new assessment and accountability models such as competency-based learning or through course assessments instead of seat time.		inform quarterly grade determination. 3. Schools must continue to complete pending initial and reevaluation assessments. Please note that in certain cases, a review of existing data is sufficient to make a determination and develop a program. 4. Utilizing data from multiple sources and avoiding overreliance on standardized norm-referenced tests when making eligibility decisions is paramount. 5.The limited diagnostic accuracy of standardized assessments and utility of evidence-based assessment techniques should always be considered.

Gmail

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

Testimonial re: Item VI

Damian Mew <damian_mew@mililanimiddle.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:12 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. My name is Damian Mew and I am a teacher at Mililani 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 nui,
ha'aha'a
Damian Mew

--
Sent while NOT operating a moving vehicle.

Gmail

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

Testimony Regarding Social Distancing

Jackson Coley <jcoley_93@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I want to submit testimony regarding schools reopening. I believe it is necessary that students be placed 6 feet apart from each-other and all students be required to wear face masks. I am worried that if a teacher becomes sick with Covid-19 they will pass it on to other children, who in turn will pass it onto their families. I believe 6 feet spacing and mandatory masks will make school safer for not only our keiki but everyone in Hawaii. Please implement these requirements before summer ends.

Mahalo

Jackson Coley

Gmail

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

thoughts about new regulations

Heather Baylosis <baylosis204@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I teach first - 3rd grade and have concerns about returning to school in August. I agree that students benefit from coming together to learn. I also understand that parents need to return to work and that school is safer than home for many students. With that being said, having the students only 3 feet apart allows for more students in the classroom. However, fewer students in one space is safer as we reopen the island and schools at the same time. I am also confused as to why students are returning to school with the expectation to be present but not interact with one another. It seems that more interaction and collaborative work can be done virtually than in the classroom. Finally, I don't see younger children being successful wearing masks for extended time periods.
I believe we should remain virtual until it is deemed safe for students to return to school without masks.

Aloha,
Heather Baylosis
baylosis204@gmail.com
cell: 808-990-0966

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shawn Mashino Uyeda <mz.shawnie@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

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.

Everyone on campus including teachers, students, and staff should be 6 feet apart at all times to prevent the spread of COVID19. Placing students closer is putting everyone at school and their families at risk. We should be following the CDC's guidelines. Today we have 41 confirmed new cases of COVID19 according to Lt. Gov. Green. Let's do our part to social distance at school to help bring the curve back down.

Thank you for hearing my concerns,

Shawn Uyeda
Castle High School Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony-Discussion Item VI(A)

Sharon Enomoto <enomotos@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:18 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 Sharon Enomoto and my children attend Webling Elementary and Moanalua High School. I am very eager to get my children back in the classroom this fall however I do not believe that 3ft of separation and optional masks are adequate measures for social distancing. Many of us parents rely on our Kupuna family members to help care for our children while we work. More importantly, our Kupuna miss and want to see their grandchildren. If the students are not properly social distancing at school we are putting them as well as the family members who care for them at risk of contracting Covid-19. Sadly, this risk will also keep them from spending time with their elderly family members as we wouldn't want to put them in danger. If we have to social distance and wear masks in public at the malls, in restaurants, hospitals and work (To name a few) then our public school employees and children should also be required to social distance themselves at 6ft apart and be required to wear mask and/or face shield.

Mahalo for your time,
Sharon Enomoto

Gmail

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

Teacher's Testimony - 6 vs 3 feet distancing

laura walker <pinkpoodle2007@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it Concerns,
I am a 63 year old counselor at Kau High and Pahala Elementary School. It is a school which offers a "Hard to Fill" financial incentives to keep their teachers from leaving every year. Many will not stay because of the difficult/needy population and the isolation of the school. I too have worked there for about 13 years now and have considered leaving, year after year. I think more will leave due to the dangers of the Corona Virus.

Again I am considering leaving because of the concerns I have with being in classrooms with many students who we expect to stay 6 feet apart. Yet NOW I am hearing that 3 feet apart is enough distance. I don't even think six feet apart will be safe as these wonderful children are playful elementary age kids who want to get up close, hug, and touch.

I say NO to 3 feet apart! I say yes to distance learning!!!



, Laura E. Walker MSC

Testimony

Leilani Johnson <johnsonleilanisky@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:19 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 Leilani Johnson-Hagmoc and I teach at Highlands Intermediate School. I teach 7th grade English Language Arts and Media Design.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the 3 feet of distancing between students in the classroom. This is unacceptable and there is not enough space between learners to keep a safe distance from each other without contracting COVID-19. The CDC and WHO guidelines define social distancing as 6 feet apart, so why is it justifiable for the DOH/DOE to implement a 3 feet mandate? This puts the health and safety of our students, teachers, and faculty at a higher risk. Research shows that the virus spreads through respiratory droplets through exhalation and breathing. In talking the virus can travel up to 8 feet, and through a sneeze can travel up to 27 feet without a mask. This is why social distancing is defined by reputable agencies as 6 feet apart and masks to be required outside of the home.

Even though students may be healthy enough to heal from the virus, others may not be so genetically lucky. Teachers themselves have compromised health systems and may live with people that are at a higher risk of contracting the disease. As a caretaker, I am in constant contact with my grandmother at my residence. She is 80 years old and at higher risk for contracting COVID-19 because she is a former cancer survivor and currently has an aortic aneurysm. I am terrified of contracting the virus and passing it onto my grandmother whose health is compromised.

Additionally, I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students upon arrival. The point is to make the virus “seen.” 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. Sometimes students cannot communicate how they are feeling when they are ill, and may downplay their symptoms and not tell an adult because of the stigma surrounding COVID-19.

Finally, Dr. Park from the Department of Health stated in the DOH Webinar for School Principals and Administrators that a combination of physical distancing, mask wearing, disinfecting surfaces, and staying home when ill will help stop spreading infection. But the DOH still insists on the 3 feet distancing as long as students can sit and face forward and sit still.

Developmentally, it is unrealistic to ask middle school students to sit still for more than 15 minutes and this seems more like a prison if they are confined to their seats for an entire class period. Dr. Park also insists that 'Ohana Bubbles' will help with contact tracing. But what if students mingle with other people outside their home/ school bubble and bring the virus into schools?

I urge you to please do what is right among our students and our educators.

Mahalo,
Leilani Johnson-Hagmoc

Gmail

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

Returning back to school

Janna Quon <jannaquon@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a mother of two young students and heard from multiple sources that the BOE is suggesting that masks are NOT required to be worn by students in the classroom and that they need to be only 3 feet away from other students, even though it is recommended that masks are worn and to be 6 feet apart. This is challenging times and with the rise of numbers again it scares me to think my children will be going back to school with all students returning at the same time with no masks and not socially distancing. And I do find it odd that we parents are hearing this from other parents instead of being informed on the news or other type of media. I am not sure if my email will make a difference in your decision but as a mom I would feel at ease knowing the school will be a safe place for all these kids and not a place of anxiety. Wearing a mask is uncomfortable but if all kids are in a classroom, even with 3 feet apart, there is no way they'd all be able to fit and distance themselves. At that point the mask would at least act as a barrier between themselves. I also understand that each school will be coming up with their own guidelines as to how the school will reopen. It has come to my attention that some schools will be voting for all students to return at the same time. Please tell me how my child will be protected if all students, from all grade levels, return back to school with no masks in class, only 3 feet apart, there is just no way! For the safety of the children, the teachers, and the community, I believe the schools must be on the same page with whatever is suggested by the State of Hawaii. I hope my email finds you well, and will wait anxiously to hear what will happen for the new school year.

Sincerely,

Janna Quon

Gmail

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

Unsafe school conditions

Deneva Broughton-Neiswanger <deneva84@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,
Sending kids to school with only 3ft space between students and optional use of face masks is criminally negligent! This is going to result in staff and students contracting covid-19 and for some a death sentence! I am medically fragile as are many teachers. This cannot be allowed. I do not feel safe returning to school.

Deneva Broughton
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Kamiki Benavides <kamiki.benavides@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:20 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 Kamiki Benavides and I have been teaching middle school science on the island of Maui at Maui Waena Intermediate for the last 13 years. I am very concerned about the safety and well being of all of the students, staff and community members. I strongly feel that the 3 feet distancing and "suggested" use of masks are completely unacceptable and extremely unsafe.

The practices mentioned above are not safe, nor is it in accordance with what is being recommended by the CDC. Currently, our school is not able to afford plexiglass, plastic sheet partitions, or face shields for staff members. They will also ONLY be providing one cleaning per day, at the end of the school day. This will be after I have had 6 different groups of students in my classroom (each group consisting about 15 students). I do not feel safe for myself, my students, or my community.

Our school and community consists mostly of multigenerational or multi family living situations. We also have a very large ELL population whose family members are medically fragile.

I have been doing a lot of thinking and reflection during this time and I am not sure if I can return to my position. I am very concerned about my health and safety, as well as the the health and safety of my own children (as they are a part of the public school system; one in elementary and one in middle school), and ALL other students who attend public schools.

I beg that you please take this into consideration and work diligently to put safer practices into place for the sake of our community.

Thank you for your time
Kamiki Benavides

Testimony

Grant Suzuki <gtsuzuki@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Aloha. I'm testifying on Discussion item VI(A): Presentation on Dept of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Grant Suzuki. I have a grandson at Maunawili Elem School, a granddaughter at Kailua High School, and a daughter in-law that teaches at Aliamanu Elementary School.

I also have numerous other family members and friends that have children in the Hawaii public school system or are teachers in the public school system.

The DOEs policy to allow 3 foot distance and no mask in the class room is just unacceptable. It puts each student and teachers at risk for contracting covid-19. Not to mention the families including Kupuna that they all have to go home to.

Its ridiculous to think that a child will stay seated looking straight ahead though out the whole day and not turn for any reason. They cough when they cough and sneeze when they sneeze. How are you going to ensure that they don't turn their head and not facing someone when doing so?

Elementary kids (especially lower elementary) just don't have the self awareness or control.

By the time its found out that someone is sick at school... it's going to be too late!!! How many people may already have been exposed?

Then it's not just about someone being "sick". Don't forget to realize the possible prolonged suffering and maybe death associated with the covid-19, that someone may have to endure! WHY?

Who's going to be held responsible when it's found that covid -19 was spread at a school because this policy, that isn't following CDC, State and City guidelines was implemented?

At least 6 feet of distance and wearing a mask should be required to protect the students, teachers/faculty and the families.

Masks don't only prevent the spread of virus from the wearer...it also helps protect the wearer from inhalation of spores.

The policy should be preventative to keep everyone safe and proactive!

Mahalo and Aloha,

Grant Suzuki

Gmail

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

testimony on masks/social distancing.

Jean Esaki <sensei@kapaahs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Name: Jean Esaki (high school teacher)
Mtg: Not sure-general business?
Agenda: masks/social distancing
Postion: comment

As a high school teacher, I have some personal trepidations in returning back to school being part of the “high-risk” demographics. As counties and states mandate masks/shields, it would seem to be common sense for compacted classroom environments to implement this practice if only to teach and learn consideration towards others in especially times like now. Everyone’s lives are even more “on-the-line’ now as we return back to work in order to survive in society.

7/7/2020

To the Members of the Board of Education and Hawaii State Government,

I am extremely opposed to the opening of our schools this fall. We have been beyond blessed to have such low numbers of disease presence in our state, but with the opening of our air travel, it is almost guaranteed to see these numbers continue to rise. With the public beginning to reopen businesses and try to find some way to return to work and social lives, with families trying to find ways to celebrate and visit safely, and with people becoming frustrated with the strictures of social isolation and quarantine, we are already seeing these numbers rise by leaps and bounds.

We have seen the fallout of opening plans across the mainland US, we have seen their numbers rise to unbelievable heights. We are seeing that even with using CDC and Department of Health guidelines, camps, businesses, cities, and entire states are having to close again due to spread of the virus. How can you ask us to send our keiki to schools in large numbers, to ask our education staff to teach large groups of children who come from across the city, town, or island? To ask support staff (custodians, counselors, bus drivers, etc.) to place themselves and their families at risk when we are seeing the rise of infection rates on a daily basis?

There are so many teachers who are in our high-risk health category, how can you ask them to face potential severe illness and death to teach children who may give them this virus? Or to bring it home to their families? There are so many students who have health problems and opening schools places them at risk for catching this virus. How can you ask parents to place their children at risk for illness and death? Placing even 15 students in a room for one day, even if they show no symptom, can open them to taking this virus home to at-risk siblings, parents, aunties and uncles, and grandparents. How can you ask them to be the vector for potentially causing the illness and even death of a family member? Or potentially causing the illness and maybe even death of a teacher or fellow student?

Here in Hawai'i, we pride ourselves on the culture of Ohana. This whole state is one Ohana. We have kept ourselves as safe as possible with great difficulty and sacrifice. Please honor our collective sacrifices and reconsider your plans for opening our schools. As a daughter to high risk parents, as a sister to three of your public-school teachers, as a nurse working here on the front lines of this crisis, and as a mother to a high-risk son, I am begging you to please consider online learning/teaching as our education alternative. Please help us to keep this Hawai'i State Ohana safe and healthy.

Marla Nora, RN
Holualoa, Big Island, Hawai'i

Gmail

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

Testimony for Discussion Item VI(A)

Christopher Hakoda <christopherhakoda@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Christopher Hakoda. I was born and raised in Hawaii, but I am currently working out-of-state. I have family members who still live in Hawaii and are in the category of people who could die if they contract the novel coronavirus. 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.

Given the pandemic and the economic crisis, I ask that the board exhibit greater caution and foresight. Although children and young adults are less likely to contract the virus, it does not mean they cannot contract it. Of equal concern is the potential for them to act as vectors to infect their loved ones. Expecting a spacing of 3 feet between students to prevent this tragedy is foolish and will be deadly for some. I understand that there are situations in which we must accept the less than perfect scenario in which we live and just deal with it so that society can continue, however I contend that this is an unnecessary risk and ignores the potential for developing students and improving Hawaii's educational system.

I am of the opinion that the board should devote all of its resources towards making the fall 2020 to spring 2021 school year completely based on distance learning. Some of the potential benefits are listed below:

- Teachers doing summer school have been doing this for the past few months and can provide feedback on how to improve the experience for students.
- By devoting all the board's resources to distance learning instead of a hybrid approach, teachers can focus on improving their online teaching abilities and developing policies to assist children learning from home.
- This is an opportunity to emphasize self-directed learning to the students and develop these skills before they go to college.
- The lessons learned these past few months and the following year can be used as reference for improving Hawaii's distance learning program which may be appealing to people who have not been able to finish their high school/college education.

When you consider the added work of rearranging classrooms and trying to instruct kids on where to go, I think continuing with distance learning is far easier and less confusing to implement. This is especially true when you consider that parents already experienced it at the beginning of the year.

I acknowledge the fact that I may not have the same information and expertise as those on the board, but I do not see any benefit to reopening the schools this fall; all I see is risk. Given that new cases continue to appear in Hawaii, a vaccine has not been found yet (let alone gone into mass production) and some kids may be vulnerable due to pre-existing conditions, I believe that devoting all the boards resources to develop a robust distance learning infrastructure is in the best interest of the students, teachers, families and citizens of Hawaii. Devoting time towards developing policies and handouts to assist teachers, students and parents in these troubling times, is worth far more than trying to figure out how to reopen schools when there isn't even a vaccine available and new cases continue to appear. Figuring out how to distribute textbooks, provide school lunches and give handouts are of greater importance than figuring out how to fit students into classrooms while spaced further apart.

In closing, I would just like to reiterate that I strongly disagree with the board's plans to reopen schools, and suggest that greater benefits and less risk can be achieved by investing heavily into planning for distance learning using the past few months as reference. Keeping our students, parents, and educators as safe as possible should be our greatest priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
- Christopher N Hakoda

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristin Lindquist <k.lindquist@seariders.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:27 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.

I am a special education teacher at Wianae High School.

I would like to ask that you require that students be seated 6 feet apart, not only 3 feet apart. This is the distance recommended by the CDC and the distance that I would like to see required in my classroom.

It is scary enough, with the rise in infections, that we will be returning to school. I want to see my students. My students want to see me. I would like to accomplish that end in as safe a fashion as possible. It is going to be challenging enough for my students to learn after the long absence that they have experienced. I don't want them to feel additional stress based on a need to wear a mask because of their proximity to a classmate. I want all of us to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. I want them seated 6 feet apart so that they will not need to wear a mask unless they are working with me or a classmate momentarily.

I am 65 years old and very fit, but I do not want to risk contracting covid because my students are too close to me or to each other.

Please require that all students be seated 6 feet apart at the beginning of the school year. As the year progresses we can reevaluate the distance requirements.

Safety should be our highest priority, both for my students and myself. Thank you for keeping this in mind as you make your final decisions.

Sincerely,
Kristin Lindquist
Special Education Teacher
Waianae High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net <dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:28 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is U'ilani DuPont, and I have been a Special Education EA, an ESL teacher, and an adult supervisor at several Windward District schools over the past 24 years. I am presently working as an EA at Kahalu'u Elementary, and have a few concerns regarding the opening of school in August.

I read today's MidWeek article, and while it appears that we have all of our bases covered, I still worry that we are rushing into this too quickly. As a faculty, we were presented with our 3 options, but it sounds like the decision has already been made. I got more information from this article than I did from our meeting, meaning we can definitely improve in the area of communication.

Many of the support staff are confused as to what our new responsibilities will be. I imagine our teachers are also contemplating the small details that we once took for granted, such as traffic flow in the hallways, cleaning of desks and computers, recess, meals, bus pick ups, faculty meetings in an air conditioned library, etc. As a school community, we have a lot to think about, and very little time to prepare for the first day of school. Preparation and knowledge is vital, so that we can hit the ground running on the first day of school. I hope that the opinions and concerns of our Educational Assistants are not only valued, but sought after, as we spend a great deal of time with our students.

Having worked at ESY Summer School, I can tell you that it is very difficult to tell preschoolers and students to maintain a 3 feet distance. The masks are not only uncomfortable, but make it difficult for students to hear. All of this was addressed in the newspaper article, but I feel that we are not preparing ourselves for the reality of the situation. While students should sit in a forward facing direction on the bus, our bus drivers are not able to enforce that.

My greatest worry will be how we handle a student or adult who comes down with COVID. I am sure that these are the concerns that have kept you up at night. All of these things, and more, are probably running rampant through the minds of our parents, who are also forced to go back to work to survive. I implore you to be more deliberate in your planning, and be inclusive to all stakeholders. In the islands, we learn to "huki" or pull together, in the same direction. I know that we will "holomua", or move forward, if we work as a unified team.

Respectfully,

U'ilani DuPont

Gmail

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

Opening schools

Martha Gomez <mayte.palomera@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:28 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm a little concern about opening the school with plan A since there is too many students in every classroom and in reality it won't be possible to keep safe distance between the children and teachers.
I'm in the Special education preschool And that plan A is going to be stressful to us as caregivers and to the little preschoolers who already have behavioral problems and in top of that we will have to deal with the COVID-19 protocols reinforcing them. Honesty is almost going to be impossible make the preschool children follow the Guidelines and enjoy their school days. That's why I think we should try to start with half the children one week and half the children the other week and see how it goes. That way we can also have them play outside which they need for sure. Please consider thinking more in the children's behalf as a whole. Thanks

Enviado desde mi iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Harley Mewha <harleymewha@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon.

My name is Harley Mewha and I am an educator working in the Hawaii School District testifying on the following discussion item: Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

The board must mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks in accordance with the agreed-upon memorandum of understanding between the HSTA and the state. Returning to a three-foot policy after coming to an agreement violates the resolution and acts against the health and safety of staff and students alike. I am imploring the board to mandate compliance with CDC guidelines on 6 feet of physical distancing. As Cory Rosenlee said, "[B]y mandating these policies in opposition to HSTA's agreement, the state is working without hope, without kindness and definitely working without togetherness." Please mandate compliance with the agreement and CDC guidelines to configure six feet between student desks. Thank you.

-Harley Mewha

Gmail

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

Testimony

Britt K <bkauina2007@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Brittnie Kauina and I am a school counselor at Helemano Elementary School. I am writing to testify on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation in Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I strongly disagree with the decision to implement a 3 foot distance between students and staff. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools "space seatings/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.

Safety should be our top priority for our students and staff and with the current 3 foot plan, we are deliberately being put in danger and risking the safety of our students and selves.

Please change the requirement to 6 feet and require masks to be worn on campus!!!

-Brittnie Kauina

Testimony

John Sandvig <jsandvig@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is John Sandvig and I am a teacher at Mililani High 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.

The protocol for keeping a minimum distance of 3 feet between students are any given time in the classroom or any educational setting is not sufficient and feels to be negligent on the part of the Board of Education. Risk of transmission of COVID-19 is high-risk when interacting with others within a 6 foot distance, which is the minimum distance advised by the CDC. When coupled by the fact that students and teachers are not required to wear masks and/or face shields, this risk increases exponentially.

There have been several international incidents (see: South Korea) when the transmission of COVID-19 occurs in the school environment and leads to an outbreak and subsequent wide-spread shutdown of schools when proper preventative measures are not taken or not properly enforced.

While I am of a younger age and not currently residing in a multi-generational home, such that my personal impact upon my health and those in my immediate household are low, there are many teachers in the Hawaii education system that are in far more dire situations. Many of the faculty at my school, and very likely at many other schools in our state, are considered to be part of high-risk categories for COVID-19 contraction. The lack of proper safety protocol, namely those of proper distancing and compulsory mask usage, will cause significant danger for these people.

It is the duty of the Board to ensure that proper measures and safeguards are taken to protect our educational faculty, our students, and everyone's families.

Respectfully,
John Sandvig
Science Teacher
Mililani High School

Gmail

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

Honor the science-based evidence. Honor the contractual agreement between the HSTA and BOE

June Dayao <juneremedios@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:32 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Manny Dayao <mannydayao@gmail.com>, Rosa Dayao <rosarojas24@gmail.com>, Mark Dayao <markdayao@gmail.com>

covid19_reopen-america-schools

covid19_reopen-america-schools www.aft.org

To the Board of Education, State of Hawaii:

I understand that schools need to reopen. However, why aren't you respecting the Guidelines provided by the CDC, The World Health Organization, and other world wide agencies regarding distancing six (6) feet apart, wearing face coverings, washing hands, etc.

As a senior, I enjoy the privilege of shopping at Costco during their senior hour. Masks are required and there are 6 feet distancing reminders everywhere. It is the same at other businesses .
What made you think that the teachers, staff and students can handle being only 3 feet apart and WITHOUT masks?

Please peruse through the www.aft.org's website regarding the covid19_reopen_america_schools

Please do not force teachers to choose jobs over their health. As a retired teacher, you know that I am concerned about my colleagues who are still working at schools. I am most worried about the students who will bring the virus back home to their families.
Did you know that 30-40 % of my former colleagues are in the high risk categorie?. Please do not force them to choose jobs over their health.

Ventilation and mask wearing along with 6 feet social distancing can be achieved specially in Hawaii. Outdoor education, outdoor classrooms, staggered school time, etc. can easily be implemented.

Please go to https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/covid19_reopen_america_schools.pdf. This site has some good ideas in opening schools.

I am counting on the Board of Education to honor the contractual agreement between YOU and the teachers's union. You must have classrooms configured with 6 feet between students, and require face coverings. Droplets fly per the most recent CDC study.

Hawaii must value the keike as well as the kupuna.

As a former public school teacher at Kahuku Intermediate and High School, Farrington High, Kalakaua Intermediate, Barbers Point Elementary and Mokulele Elementary Schools, I worked in Hawaii for 8 years until I moved to San Francisco where I worked for the San Francisco Unified School District for 30 years in one school!

I urge you to think about the impact of your decision NOT to
follow the guidelines that the general public is adhering with. These are science based recommendations. What made you think that the teachers, staff and students will be fine? Please reconsider your decisions for the sake of my former colleagues, their families, our island communities and most of all, for the sake of our future - Na Keiki O Ka Ai'na .

Yours Truly,

June Dayao, M.Ed.
Retired Special Education Teacher

San Francisco unified School District

Gmail

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

School opening 2020 - 2021

Christine Lau <laulauc888@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:36 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

As a concerned parent of two high school students, it is confusing and concerning as a parent to hear all this time that we should be social distancing a minimum of 6 feet apart, yet the BOE is stating that students are required to keep a distance of only 3 feet apart. As someone who also works in the school system as an Educational Assistant on the elementary side, and as an adult looking in, I feel like it will be a no win situation if this is not corrected. Everybody wants things to get back to normal, and so many parents stressed out during the 4th quarter of last school year. Most parents do not want to have to home school or teach their child. However, the moment that someone in the school gets sick, there will be some parent who says that the BOE did not do enough to protect the children and staff that 3 feet apart is negligent.

I know that there are some parents who may be afraid to send their children back to school and want them to be homeschooled. I am sure there are some staff that feel the same way as well since they want to protect their families also. The state should provide more online schooling for those parents who do not want their children to go back to school. The teacher that are not needed in the schools because enrolment may go down should then be used as the online teachers. This will help decrease numbers in school so that six feet distancing is possible.

Mahalo for taking the time to hear my concerns and suggestion. Prayers of safety to you and yours during this stressful and difficult time.

Very respectfully,
Chris Lau

Gmail

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

Testimony

Vania Reyes <mrsvkreyes@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:37 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 2020-20221 School year.

It is irresponsible and dangerous for the DOE and BOE to not take proper measures to protect our keiki, teachers, and staff during the midst of a pandemic. Hawaii's numbers are climbing, and we haven't seen any concrete plans to effectively prevent the spread when classes resume in the fall. A few months ago, the DOE stated that they will not reopen schools until Hawaii has 4 weeks of no new cases. Today (July 7th), we had a record high of 41 new cases, and the DOE thinks that we'd be ok with our students sitting 3 feet away from each other and not wearing masks?

The DOE needs to take a stand and come up with a better plan to support schools, not just pass the responsibility on to the principals at each school across the state.

Vania Reyes, former Hawaii public school teacher

Gmail

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

re: testimony

Lee Ann Oshiro <66tomiko@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sir:

I am Lee Ann Oshiro, teacher at Aiea Elementary School, and am writing to you about 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 with a compromised immune system, I am not confident that 3 feet of distancing is enough space for children to be safe. Just today, I went to my classroom to physically move the desks around. 6 feet of distancing gives students just the right amount of space to move around while also being safe. If we cram a lot of students into a room, regardless if its a classroom bubble or not, we are putting our students and everyone else at risk. If the entire community is practicing 6ft of social distancing, shouldn't we do the same in our schools? Teachers, students, and any visitor on campus must also wear masks. We are constantly given news briefings about wearing masks, and now the community must wear masks indoors and outdoors. So why are we not doing the same in our schools?

Teachers are confused. Our union has negotiated certain safety protocols and then for some reason, the protocols have changed. I do not want any of my students to be the first student covid19 case, nor do I want to contract the virus. Please believe in the power of masks, and help us encourage our youth to practice safety protocols.

Sincerely,
Lee Ann Oshiro, NBCT

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mary Ann Yokoyama <may@laserbarcode.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am responding to Discussion Item VI (A) Reopening school plans for 2020-2021. It is very important that all schools observe the 6- feet requirement for students in the classroom. While public places are having a 6-feet requirement, it is especially important that it is done in the classes for both the students and the teachers. We do not need to have our students and teachers exposed and spread to their homes and families.

Please keep our schools safe. Thank you.

M. Yokoyama

Testimony

Sally Iwankiw <sallyanddon@msn.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:40 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I have serious concerns about the 3 ft distance and the ability to keep masks on k-1 kudos. How do you keep them from each other? What about our special needs children? Can we keep masks on them? What happens if a child is infected and the classroom becomes a hot spot? Can we be sued by parents for not keeping their child safe? Do we need extra insurance to protect ourselves? Parents I've talked to are outraged. We need a plan and so far no one has come up with one that will work!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jody Glickman <jodylynn.glickman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a teacher at Kihei Elementary School and would like to return to work knowing that the utmost has been done to keep everyone safe. To protect teachers, students, and our families, we must be required to stick to the 6ft social distancing determination! Requiring everyone to only keep 3 feet is putting everyone at unnecessary risk!

Thank you,
Jody-Lynn Glickman

Gmail

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

testimony

sandie williams <sandiewilliams808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

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. I am a concerned parent of an educator from Mililani High School as well as a concerned community member.

I am outraged by the guidelines recently set by the Governor and BOE for the opening of public schools in the state of Hawaii (20-21 school year) during a global pandemic as covid-19 continues to fester and grow in our state. The CDC clearly states, along with other highly respected scientists and institutions, that 6 ft social distancing, mask and stringent hygiene are necessary to contain the virus and keep it from spreading. Why has the BOE blatantly manipulated and eliminated the guidelines so that now, 3 ft. social distancing and a no mask policy has become the rule?

The BOE superintendent is a highly paid individual who is not doing her job. Why can she not take the time to be creative and innovative, and come up with new, safer guidelines for the classroom that will keep risk low for both students and teachers? Instead, she formulated an ill-conceived plan that endangers the lives of everyone, especially teachers. According to the CDC website, the Superintendent and BOE are imposing the highest level of risk to our teachers and children are therefore being extremely negligent in their duties!

In conclusion, if the Governor of Hawaii, Superintendent Kishimoto and the BOE feel that they have created a safe environment for learning, then they should each periodically spend a few days in a classroom with teachers and students following their guidelines. In fact, they should lead their lives using their guidelines:

No mask
3 ft. distancing

Need I say more?

Thank you for your time.

Aloha,
Sandie Williams

Gmail

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

School reopening

Whitney Yamamoto <whit1029@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Afternoon,

My name is Whitney Nguyen and I am currently a grade 2 teacher. I am writing in regard to the General Meeting that will be held on July 9, 2020.

Mayor Kirk Caldwell has announced that masks need to be worn indoors and to maintain 6-feet distance from one another. Also, the CDC's considerations for schools indicate that masks be work and that desks be placed 6 feet apart.

I understand the need for children to go to school, however the health and safety of teachers, students, parents, should not be put at risk.

Thank you for your consideration,
Whitney Nguyen

Gmail

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

mask rules and social distancing for upcoming 2020-21 SY

Lee <hosdine@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am submitting a written testimony to address concerns for mask requirements and social distancing for the upcoming school year as set forth by the Hawaii Dept. of Education.

My major concern as a teacher at my school in Pahoa, Hawaii are:

Is the distancing guidelines for the state enough to keep staff and students safe from becoming infected by the virus that is increasing on a daily basis? I can see having to spend a lot of valuable instruction time with having to remind students about the guidelines,

teenagers are very social and may have difficulty adhering to these guidelines in the classroom.

We were informed by the administration at a recent faculty meeting that the mask requirements in the classroom setting is optional; this a closed environment and allows the airborne particles to be passed to others more effectively as opposed to an outside

setting, and when you have numerous individuals in a closed setting such as this; makes for a more concerning situation for both staff and students. I am not quite comfortable with this would like this to be revisited and revised in order to ensure safety and health

well being a priority for all affected parties.

Thank you for your time with these concerns, Your attention to this matter is highly appreciated.

Mahalo,

L. Begaye
PHIS
Pahoa, HI

TESTIMONY

Elizabeth Baclayon <sedgekitty1608@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the 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.

My name is Elizabeth Baclayon. I am a veteran teacher; school year of 2020- 2021 will be my 27th year teaching for the Hawaii Department of Education. I have taught at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School in Lihue, Kauai for 20 years and am about to begin my 21st year teaching 6 periods of 8th grade Social Studies and one period of Holocaust Studies, an elective class I created myself and volunteered to teach, in order to address racism, intolerance, and bullying.

I am in excellent standing with the EES (Educator Evaluation System) having received the rating of "Highly Effective" last year. Additionally, I am a national awardee of the competitive and prestigious James Madison Fellowship, and having completed a Masters Degree in American History & Government, as well as the accompanying, rigorous requirements of the Madison Summer Institute at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. in 2014, received the honor of being designated a national Constitutional Scholar. I have received letters of commendation from the U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono, the late U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, and former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, appointed under the Obama Administration, and was nominated for teacher of the year twice (but I did not follow through with the paperwork because of a battle with cancer during those years). Throughout my 27 years of teaching in Hawaii I have served as Team Leader, Department Head, and on many committees such as the Crisis and Safety Team. Two teachers at my school are former students of mine, and I am now teaching children of former students.

I list these credentials to demonstrate my standing as a highly qualified teacher in my field; as you know, Hawaii is chronically short of highly qualified teachers, an ongoing situation that harms our keiki's academic growth. Hawaii cannot afford to lose any more teachers, let alone highly qualified teachers. However, as a cancer survivor who is over 60 and recently medically recertified as "immunocompromised," your plan for reopening schools puts me at risk for death. If you maintain your perilous stance of 3 feet distance without masks, I will have no choice but to retire early, and Hawaii will lose yet another highly qualified teacher. I urge you to not sacrifice the safety of teachers, students and their families, staff, school bus drivers, and substitutes to this deadly disease on the financial altar of logistical expediency.

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 also cite current new cases that have surged on Kaua'i in the last two weeks, several of whom are children and 4 are confirmed travel related, all from different locations across the island and different, non related families. Kaua'i currently stands at 42 confirmed Covid-19 cases. Two weeks ago that number was 21.

That is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in a memorandum of understanding recently signed between HSTA and the state last Saturday, "Schools and worksites shall work to minimize the risk of Covid-19 by "maintaining six (6) feet or two (2) arms' lengths (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 BOE 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." (Corey Rosenlee, President, HSTA)

Six feet social distance is required at the Universities, at Costco, Walmart, the Post Office, and restaurants in recognition of safety, but for public school teachers and students the BOE mandates only three-feet? Without masks? Your presumption that masks are unecessary because students will just have to"face forward," without talking or looking or interacting with their peers in order to make 3-feet "safe," imperils everyone in the classroom! Students will not "face forward" for 6 hours per day, without turning towards or interacting with their classmates - to suggest they can be made to do so inside classrooms the entire school day is unrealistic and grossly negligent on the part of the BOE.

The same rules that apply legally to protect the public should apply and protect our schools! SEVENTY-FOUR (74) staff have already died in New York City schools because of Covid-19, and on Kaua'i the recent surge is higher than when schools were initially closed in March!

There is no reason to expose teachers and staff to such deadly risk! The safest route would be to resume 100% virtual learning - please do not cite the skewed survey results that purport distance learning was ineffective last quarter. Student participation was minimal because teachers were NOT allowed to grade the assignments; once students realized this, they stopped participating, and many parents did not see value in forcing their keiki to do assignments that did not count towards a student's GPA - allow teachers to formally grade student work completed through distance learning, and the program will indeed, work.

However, I recognize that 100% distance learning does not solve the BOE's dilemma of businesses needing a place to store keiki so their parents can return to work, thus we are presented with the State's 3 hybrid models from which to choose.

I can live with that, but LITERALLY only if the BOE honors the MOU and maintains the six-foot distance and mandatory masks!

30 -40 % of Hawaii's teachers are in the high risk category for contracting Covid-19! I am only one of them; medically documented as immunocompromised, over 60, with compromised lungs from a prior battle with cancer. The BOE's decision on this matter will determine whether I seek ADA accommodations to protect my health, or retire early, which would break my heart because teaching is as necessary to my life as breathing. Ironically, pending the BOE's decision, teaching could very well be the death knoll that silences my breathing...permanently. Do the right thing. Be PONO - honor the MOU.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth L. Baclayon
Grade 8 U.S. History & Government Teacher
Grades 7 & 8 elective Holocaust Studies Teacher
Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School
Lihue, Hi 96766

elizabeth_baclayon@eckms.k12.hi.us
sedgekitty1608@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Rose <michellerose_@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:45 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Michelle Rose (parent)
Kamalii Elementary School

I don’t believe we should jeopardize the health of our children, teachers, staff, and families because our classrooms do not provide adequate space to allow 6 feet spacing as recommended. It is unlikely and absurd to think children ages 5, 6,7,8,9,10 will remain seated and facing forward for an entire school day to avoid requiring every student wear a mask. Mask requirements should be mandatory in school as is currently in any enclosed public area. Teachers frequently need to be in closer contact to teach a writing or reading skill and the safest way to protect everyone is to wear a face covering. If parents do not want their children to wear a mask because of personal reasons then they can choose the distance learning option that the DOE will provide. Masks are our new normal. We can not & must not pretend we are invincible. It’s not permanent, only temporary until we have a better grasp on Covid 19. A mask is not going to harm or jeopardize anyone’s physical or mental health. Health care professionals wear masks for much longer periods of time (12 hour shifts). Please do the right thing and make masks mandatory in the classroom. Its the only way.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Nellwyne Young <nellwyneyoung@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:46 PM

Aloha! My testimony is for the Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020–2021 School Year. Like many of my colleagues in the Department of Education I am very concerned that we are being asked to put more students into a confined space than what was previously agreed upon. Am I concerned about my health? Oh most definitely! And now that the Mayor has mandated the use of masks can that be required as well?

Look, I understand the need to get our kids back to school. I agree, but we also need to take into account the safety of our educators and support staff, not to mention the well being of our students.

Please let's go back to the agreed upon 6 feet distance.

Nellwyne Young
James Campbell High School
parent of two college aged sons (and yes, I'm worried about them too!)

Testimony

Carey Goo <careygoo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:48 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 Carey Vrugic and I am a fourth grade teacher at Mokapu Elementary School on Marine Corps Base Hawai'i. I am very concerned about the Hawaii State Department of Education's decision to place students only three feet apart and allow them to choose not to wear masks. Everything I have read from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on education has said that even within a classroom students should still be six feet apart and should be wearing masks. They go on to encourage teaching about the importance of masks and public health.

I know it is not fun to wear a mask. I myself, as an adult, do not enjoy it, but I also know our students are capable of this and taking the matter seriously if everyone else around them is. I cannot wait to be back in the classroom with my students. They are the reason I became a teacher and I truly enjoy each day. However, I want to go back in a safe way, as recommended by the CDC, that will not cause us to need to go to 100% distance learning.

Mahalo,
Carey Vrugic

Gmail

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

Teaching with Covid

Lisa <lisatama@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:52 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!
My name is Lisa Tamanaha and I have been a substitute teacher for 10 years now. I thoroughly enjoy my job and always look forward to the upcoming year. However, with Covid cases on the rise, I am seriously thinking of not continuing my profession unless 6 feet social distancing and masks are mandatory in school. I ask humbly to consider regulating these policies.
Thank you for your time.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Re: Testimony (Discussion Item VI (A))

Jamie Lyn Tateyama <jltateyama@moanaluahs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Jaimelynn Tateyama and I am a Japanese language teacher at Moanalua High School.
I am testifying 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.
As a floating teacher at my high school, I do not have my own classroom and every day I go to at least 4 different classrooms. I am worried that if the configuration of six feet between student desks is not in place, I will have a higher risk of getting COVID-19. I say this because this 2019-2020 school year, desks from one floating classroom were only 3ft away and a student coughed on me and the next day after I also got the flu myself. I had to leave school and I was out sick for the rest of the exam period (I was told to stay at home and not report to work for 6 days) and could not help my students when they needed my help the most. It was the worst feeling to get sick and also not be able to help my students. The configuration of six feet in all schools will help us teachers minimize our risk as much as possible and also enable us to do our jobs.
As a family member, not having the six feet configuration with desks also puts me at risk with my family members at home. I live with family members that are 80 and 88 years old. One of the members has diabetes and other medical complications, while the other also is in the high risk category due to her recent medical situation. I do not want to be a risk to my family and worry already daily about their health due to this pandemic.
Lastly, in addition to the six feet configuration with desks, I truly feel that mask usage is very important and that everyone at school should be required to wear a mask. Teacher, students and other staff members. Already there have been cases outside of school where there have been COVID-19 infections due to people not wearing masks. I also know because both the student and I did not wear a mask (in my experience above) we both got sick and others caught the flu shortly after as well. It is truly dangerous for teachers to work in the classroom even if one student does not wear a mask. The spread can happen in 24 hours (just like in my situation) and in 2 weeks everyone will be affected. We are putting our lives on the line without having the 6ft configuration and also without implementing mandatory mask usage. I am sharing this because I am worried about myself as a teacher, as a family member and of course my students and their families. Everyone will be affected by these two important factors dealing with school reopening again.

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 and
also to implement mandatory mask usage.

Please think of the health and well being of everyone (students, teachers, staff and all of our families involved).

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Aloha,
Jaime Tateyama

This user is a staff member at
Moanalua High School
2825 Ala Ilima Street
Honolulu, HI 96818
www.moanaluahs.org

Gmail

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

Testimony re: Reopening Schools

LH <wailukupapaya@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:56 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am an elementary school teacher on Maui and have concerns regarding the reopening of schools.

Allowing students to be 3 feet apart vs 6 feet apart is not in line with CDC guidelines. Students and teachers are going to be INDOORS all day, which has been shown to be more dangerous than being outside. Add to that the fact that masks will not be required and the situation becomes even more dangerous. Opening windows and turning on fans do not create enough circulation to blow the virus out of the classroom. The longer people stay in a room and the longer people are exposed to the virus, the higher and more likely the chances are of infection.

When school begins, I will become the hub for germs, transmission, and infections in my family—risking the health of my husband, daughter, and parents who are in their 70s. I do not think it is worth the risk. Without our health, nothing else is possible. Please rethink the guidelines and requirements for reopening schools—health and safety is the #1 priority over an arbitrary timeline of needing to get back into school. “Normal” is no longer part of our lives. What will happen if we are safe rather than sorry? We will be alive. It terrifies me to think of all the people I know and love .... to think that there is a possibility that because of the choices we make now, they may not be alive in a few months... or to think that it could be me. I am horrified to think of what my family would go through.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gmail

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

Returning to School August 4th, 2020

Marilyn Rodgers <marodgers@kamaile.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I implore you to please recognize that the outline provided by the State and the DOE for teachers to start the school year is absolutely unsafe and therefore unacceptable. We cannot start the school year on campus with these ignorant mandates.

We cannot reinforce the need for students to be 3 ft apart as long as they are facing the same direction. This is just not possible. As a matter of fact, the 6 ft distancing space is also risky and difficult to implement. Schools and workplaces should arrange students to be at minimum 6 ft. apart is what HSTA agreed with. First of all, we cannot glue students to their seats during the school day, and make them face the front of the class. HSTA agreed to the 6 ft. plan, so why is 3 ft. apart plan being asked? Second, students are going to interact with their peers, they will turn their heads, and will want to work together. Students are not robots. They are living beings with needs and habits.

Please, reconsider your recommendations. We are anxious to get back to school, but we need to choose healthier and safer possibilities.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Rodgers
M.Ed., Inclusion Specialist
Teacher Community Based Instruction, D-Workroom
Kamaile Academy PCS
85-180 Ala Akau St. Waianae, HI 96792
TEL: (808) 697-7110
FAX: (808) 697-7115
Before 7 am - after 3 pm: 808-232-6152 (cell - talk & text)

"Share with a wise person, and he will become wiser. Teach someone righteous, and he will add to his learning" - Proverbs 9:9

Gmail

Testimony BOE <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.

Michelle O'byrne <michelle.o'byrne@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the Hawaii Board of Education-
I am a teacher in the DOE and also a parent of a child in a DOE school.
I am concerned about the DOE's plan to return to school.
The current blended learning models, which stipulate that one-half of students will attend school for 2 days then the other half will 2 days a week does provide more opportunity for social distancing but beyond that, it has no relevance to the pathology of the coronavirus. Our current understanding is that once exposed, it takes about 4 days for a person to produce enough virus to shed, potentially passing it to another person. However, the person may not develop symptoms for another 10-14 days. What this blended learning model effectively does is set up teachers and staff to be vectors to transmit the coronavirus from one group of students to the other and it puts teachers at a high risk of exposure to a potentially deadly virus.
In addition, schools and the DOE are blithely moving forward with this model with no consideration for parents who work including teachers. DOE schools do not function as an independent entity. Parents rely on schools to teach their children so they can do the jobs of providing electricity, water, and waste management to the schools, teaching in DOE schools, and other jobs that are essential to our communities. The DOE has proceeded with zero regards or policy to support teachers with children in DOE schools. This is extremely shortsighted and will surely only lead to an increase in the teacher shortage in Hawaii. It appears that the only option is for public school teachers to pay for private education for their children in order to keep teaching in the DOE which is not feasible on a teacher's salary, particularly for single parents.
In addition, teachers will be expected to teach remotely, whether synchronously or asynchronously, and we have received no training or support for this. It is entirely up to teacher to use their time and money to be sufficiently trained in order to effectively manage distance learning. I urge the board to consider some resources and training that could be offered to teacher in the remaining weeks before school begins.
This is a time of hardship for so many and a time that calls for empathy as well as creativity.
Thank you for taking into consideration the testimony submitted by teachers.
Sincerely,
Michelle O'Byrne

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

Testimony

Jo <jdsy@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:59 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: Jo Dee Schmidt-Young
Work: August Ahrens Elementary School

It concerns me that 3ft. Distancing in our classroom is being said that it's good enough. I strongly disagree, if 6ft. distancing is mandatory for everyone else why not teachers and our students? I'm worried about my safety and those that I come in to contact when school starts.

Please reconsider your stance on the 3ft. Distancing.

Mahalo,
Mrs. Schmidt-Young

Sent from my iPhone

07/07/2020

Perry S. Buchalter, NBCT
P.O. Box 97 Maunaloa, HI. 96770
Fine Arts/CTE teacher, Molokai High School

Testimony: Returning to school

Dear Board Members and whomever else this may concern,

First, please know how much we appreciate your time on this most sensitive issue as we are most concerned about how to stay safe during this very new reality.

Our main concern is students safety, also for faculty and all staff members. Where we can control, to the best of our abilities, the parameters of our schools and classrooms, we will not have control over what or who students are exposed to off campus beyond the school day. There are also concerns over families who've traveled out of State or inter-island; especially for those who live in more isolated areas that have inadequate medical facilities. Will they have to self-quarantine? How will we know if they've traveled? Who enforces this?

As this pandemic shows no signs of subsiding we have to take all factors into consideration and limit contact as much as possible. Maintaining CDC standards such as 6 foot distancing and no more than 10 in a group. This means minimizing class size through student rotation of days on and off campus, distance learning, and working with those families with no internet access or other socioeconomic challenges. There are also concerns for our special needs population who are mandated to be on campus daily and assuring the teachers and staff have the supplies needed to service the children.

We've witnessed what happens when a city opens without strict guidelines in place, the surge in cases nationwide are evidence enough. Add to that the fact that students and strict guidelines are somewhat of an oxymoron; how best to adhere to or enforce those guidelines will be a challenge even in small classes as students will need to develop new habits. Please also consider that a large percentage of faculty and staff are in the age group most susceptible to this virus and the more students we interact with each day increases our chances of contracting it. We care greatly about our students, but family comes first and any interaction at school now comes home with us to our families.

Until a vaccine is developed, the reality of distance learning with periodic face to face interaction will have to be the new norm. Please take these factors into account as you make your decisions on how best to proceed with this upcoming school year.

With appreciation,
Perry S. Buchalter

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kim E <kimelizabeth01@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii 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 deeply concerned about the three foot distancing vs the six foot distancing recommended by health experts, leaving it up to teachers to access whether a child is ill or not, and whether the DOE will be providing PPE and handwashing supplies to schools as this will be an extra cost to both students, their families and teachers which many families can not afford.

In addition, there is mounting evidence by scientific experts that COVID is an airborne virus (please see link below) which makes social distancing and wearing masks even more vital. The state of Hawaii has been quite diligent with precautions to reduce the spread of COVID overall. The HIDOE's plan for 3 foot distancing is not only dangerous for our keiki and educators, it may possibly cause a complete shut-down of schools if mass spreading occurs which would be more damaging to our keiki in the long run - both physically and emotionally. Also, teachers are not medical experts, and should not be expected to screen students for COVID-19 in addition to their teaching responsibilities. As a resource teacher, I travel to 20 schools in our complex area, and meet with teachers in small and large groups, and work alongside teachers in their classrooms with students, so I will be exposed to many indoor environments that are not properly ventilated which according to the article is most susceptible to the virus spreading (see recent articles below).

With the utmost sincerity, I implore you to reconsider the 3 foot distancing plan that violates the safety of our keiki, teachers/staff, and our contract. Mahalo for your time and consideration of my concerns as I know the beautiful culture of Hawai'i is focused on taking care of the collective - our HIDOE ohana, which includes parents and community members.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/health/239-experts-with-one-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne.html

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-who-airborne/who-acknowledges-emerging-evidence-of-airborne-spread-of-covid-19-idUSKBN2482AU

Mahalo nui loa,
Kim Kozak
District Resource Teacher
Pomaikai'a Elementary, SSC Building

Gmail

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

Testimony: Reopening Schools 2020-2021

Courtney Flower <ceflower7@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I teach at Pomaika'i Elementary where both my children attend school. Pomaika'i is proposing to open using the Model A face to face, full enrollment daily. This model is based on students being 3 feet apart minimum and having masks on while outside the classroom. While with our own "cohort" class, students may remove masks.

I do not feel that my safety, the safety of students, staff, and my own children is a priority in regards to reopening in this manner. While I will need to work for financial reasons, I am considering keeping my children home.

If it is not feasible to keep at least a 6ft distance with masks, which is required in the public setting, how can we consider reopening schools that allows 3ft social distancing without wearing masks.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Courtney Flower

Gmail

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

Testimony

Dallas Correa <dallas.correa@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:04 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**. As a former teacher at Niu Valley Middle School and now currently at Kalani High School I stand with other teachers who worry about their safety in the classroom and the 3ft distance currently required between students. As cases continue to rise, up to 41 new cases just today, I believe 3 feet does not meet the set standard of 6 feet as seen elsewhere in our state and country. Please reconsider for the safety of not only our students but the teachers, administrators, and Most importantly our families.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Dallas Correa

Sent from my iPhone

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Board of Education - General Business Meeting 7/9/20
Agenda Item VI.A. Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Good Afternoon,
I would like to voice my concern over the policy that allows schools to distance students at a minimum of three feet. I believe that for the sake of the students and the educators, a six-foot minimum distance between children should be required. I realize that even with the six-foot distance **and** masks, students may still pass along the virus to their classmates and/or teachers (or vice versa). However, I think the six-foot mandate will provide teachers, parents, and students a little more peace of mind. In a time when there is much trauma in people's lives, I think the six-foot distancing will help put a dent in the stress and worry affecting teachers, parents, and students. Now more than ever, if we can help lower the stress felt by families and educators, why wouldn't we? If a "simple" (I know nothing is ever simple in a school setting) six-foot distance can contribute to people's well-being, I believe it is worth it.
I humbly ask that you consider mandating a six-foot distance between students and requiring students to wear masks (to align to the City and County of Honolulu's law).

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter,
Gail Izumigawa

Gmail

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

Requested testimony

Gayle Bove <GBove6828@outlook.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:06 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I'm a third grade teacher at Hickam Elementary. If the government of Hawai'i maintains that six feet of distance in all public areas is the safest option, then it is also the safest option in our schools. We should not sacrifice safety standards for our own convenience. I am excited to teach this school year, and am willing to adapt to the new normal as it is defined by our elected officials and health experts. If their definition holds that six feet is the way to maintain a sense of normalcy, then six feet is what we must adhere to.

Mrs. Gayle Bove
Hickam Elementary School
3rd grade Gen Ed teacher
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Corie Sakai <cdelapena@waialae.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am writing a testimony 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 am a first grade teacher at Wai'alae PCS, as well as a parent of a child who attends Wilson Elementary. I strongly oppose allowing 3ft physical distancing and doing away with wearing masks in the classroom. I have seen numerous social media posts of school aged children in large gatherings not practicing social distancing or wearing masks, so this idea of an 'ohana bubble is ridiculous. I am genuinely concerned for the health and safety for myself, my family, the students, and my fellow colleagues. My parents are in the at-risk age group and are helping to provide care for my youngest child who is not in school yet, and will be watching my oldest should his school choose to do a hybrid model. We also help provide care for my great-grandparents, and I'm very worried about their safety as well. 30 to 40 percent of our members are in high-risk categories. These are unprecedented times, and the CDC indicates that placing students and teachers less than six feet apart, especially without face coverings, creates a higher risk for the spread of COVID-19. Schools worldwide that have already reopened have had to be shut down. Advocating for social and physical distancing helps to avoid the very real possibility of having to close all schools. For the health and safety of everyone, I strongly urge you to please follow the CDC guidelines. We already have a teacher shortage, what will we do if we lose more because they are in fear of getting sick? Just today the count was at 41 cases, and they will continue on this increased trajectory especially as the economy continues to open up. I understand the many pressures you are being faced with, but I personally feel that we aren't ready yet to reopen when there are so many questions that have been left unanswered. Clear guidelines and structures are still not in place. How can anyone feel like it is a safe working/learning environment to be in?

Mahalo nui for taking the time to listen,
Corie

--
Corie Dela Pena | Teacher
Wai'alae Elementary Public Charter School
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816
(808) 733-4880 ext. ___
http://www.waialae.edu

Wai'alae School
Celebrating Childhood

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Testimony BOE <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.

Michelle O'byrne <michelle.o'byrne@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the Board of Education-
I am concerned about the Board's decision to not adhere to the CDC's guidelines for mask-wearing and safe social distancing.
From the CDC website:

- CDC recommends all people 2 years of age and older wear a cloth face-covering in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected. That's why it's important for everyone to wear cloth face coverings in public settings and practice social distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from other people).

If the Board of Education ignores the CDC's recommendations, it will put teachers and students at risk of contracting a potentially deadly virus.
We do not want to make the national 6 o'clock news for spreading Covid 19 through our communities by knowingly disregarding CDC guidelines.
Thank you for considering teacher testimony,
Sincerely
Michelle O'Byrne

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

Testimony

maliaoflanikai <maliaoflanikai@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to let you know BOE members, that since the DOE is reversing their agreement on item VI in our agreement- the 6 ft. Social distancing in classrooms - I am being forced to retire. I wanted to keep working, but I have a high risk family member so I can't risk the transmission in my military school where there is no testing of incoming service member's and now no 6' ft. of safety.!! No masks? Aerosol studies show without masks, droplets can carry 20 ft. in the air. Are they crazy?

The DOE is not protecting the teachers. They need to think outside the box and stagger schedules more. OR Let's buy some tarps if we must and put them on the play fields. Have classes there. Engage the military to put them up.

I will not be used by the state anymore. I must leave under the current circumstances. Sorry, I didn't want to leave like this after 35 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE. You will lose an excellent teacher because the DOE is sacrificing a few teacher's for the state of the economy.

Sincerely,
MTubbs

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony

amber hernandez <amberhern@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:09 PM
Reply-To: "amberhern@yahoo.com" <amberhern@yahoo.com>
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello,
My name is Amberlynn Hernandez and I am a EA at kahlauu elementary school. As an educator I in a SPED preachool classroom I understand the need for children to be back in school! I understand the gravity of how this pandemic has affected their parents and caregivers as well. With that said I cannot understand how we can safely educate them in our kind of environment. Some of our students have little to no large/ fine motor skills and we have to be their bodies. In no way can we socially distance ourselves from these children. I also cannot imagine some of them wearing masks for ANY amount of time. I do realize the importance of their education and it is so important but it just doesn't seem doable. As a parent I don't want my children in school right now PERIOD! We go out but control our and their environment, at school we are powerless to control their surroundings and interactions! I think we should push school re opening back to at least September. With cluster cases on the rise I cannot understand why Hawaii DOE feels the need to treat our children so carelessly.
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

Melanie Chan-Vinoray <melachan21@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Esteemed Members of the Board of Education,

Aloha, I am Melanie Chan-Vinoray, a secondary educator in the Maui-Baldwin-Kekaulike complex. I have worked for the Department of Education since 2009 at Maui Waena Intermediate in Kahului, HI, and this year I will be servicing the students of Lokelani Intermediate in Kihei, HI. I am submitting testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-21 School Year. I am writing as a concerned educator, parent, and caregiver for an elderly family member in regards to the Department of Education's proposed plan to allow for social distancing of three (3) feet in a classroom setting. This is contrary to the U.S. Center's for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation that schools "space seating/desks at least six (6) feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19. The CDC characterizes students who are "not spaced apart" as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID19. This is why the HSTA advocated for and agreed upon the following language in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) just signed by both the Hawaii State Teacher's Association (HSTA) and the Department of Education 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 believe returning to school with only a three-foot social distancing policy after coming to an agreement with the 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. Please, we need to have thoughtful consideration and actual practice of the Boards' guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working towards Togetherness are the fundamental motivators to reopen schools. A three foot distance between students and staff is not making the safety of the children in our charge a priority. Establishing a policy of three (3) feet is in opposition to the MOU, in opposition to the safety guidelines established by the CDC. Please encourage the Department of Education to meet the basic guidelines and objectives of safety as outlined by the CDC, or as backed by epidemiology and medical experts, for six (6) feet of distance between students in classrooms, as classrooms are meeting spaces, as well as exterior school grounds. Educators and public school spaces have the unprecedented opportunity in history to serve a critical public health role in educating the public on COVID-19 policies that move us towards the nation's recovery, not relapse.

Every precaution must be taken to ensure the safety of our keiki, support staff and educators. After school hours, I am a parent and a caregiver: I come home to my small preschool age children and to my mother in law who is a kupuna and immunocompromised. A three (3) feet distance policy does not ensure the safety of my middle school students, colleagues in my workplace, my own children and extended family in my care.

Thank you for your consideration, your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Melanie Chan-Vinoray
Educator, Parent and Concerned Community Member

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Araki <melander@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:10 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. I am a teacher at Hilo High School and also a parent of two children. One will be starting sixth grade at Waiakea Intermediate and the other will be a freshmen at Waiakea High School.

I have many concerns about the reopening of schools in August. But, I will focus on my top two concerns.

One huge concern is the DOE's insistence that 3 feet between desks in classrooms are sufficient. 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 know the DOE has said they are also going on guidance of the Department of Health and they are recommending something different from the CDC. But, I watched in dismay as Ms. Park explained on TV that 3 feet is sufficient space because classrooms are controlled environments. Obviously she has not been in a classroom. Yes, teachers have control of their classrooms, but we can't control a sneeze or cough. There are many students that don't cover their mouths when they sneeze or cough. I have had high schoolers cough in my face. I always explain to them about covering, but at that point, I have potentially been infected.

That leads into my next concern. The agreement that students and teachers **should** wear face coverings will lead to many inconsistencies. Believe me, I am not looking forward to wearing them when we go back to school. But, I also realize that it's something that is necessary for everyone's safety.

I am anxious to return to school. I am excited to see my students and interact with them. But, I am fearful for them and their families. I am fearful for my own family. We all realize that there are no easy answers and we can't make everyone happy, but please make sure that the DOE insures that we are as safe as we can be when we return to school.

Thank you,

Michelle Araki

Gmail

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

Testimony

lynette mililani <lynetteve808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lynette Von Elsner. I am a Social Studies teacher at Olomana School, WW District. I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): DOE's plan for reopening schools 2020-2021 SY.

On July 6, 2020, Gov. Ige thanked Hawaii residents 'on their efforts and sacrifices to keep Covid-19 cases low.' We've done this by vigilantly wearing MASKS and staying 6 FEET APART! It's horrifying how lightly HIDOE dismisses these practices. Their 'business as usual' attitude sends one message: HIDOE could care less about the health and welfare of the children and educators of Hawaii. Please enforce the recommended 6 feet apart with masks.
Mahalo for your time & consideration.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kim Link <kimmee611@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:13 PM
Reply-To: Kim Link <kimmee611@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We 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.**

My name is Kim Link and my son, 2nd grade, attends Kualapuu Elementary school on Molokai. My husband, Ryan, and I are also teachers at the same school.

We are asking that the state mandate that school space students 6 feet apart to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. Stores, restaurants, airports and everywhere else require 6 feet between people. Why would we not expect the same for our students in schools?

Thank you for your time!

-Kim Link

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Shannon Yano <shannon.yano@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:13 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 Shannon Yano, I am a third grade teacher at Nimitz Elementary School. I am writing to you, in hopes that you will have a change in heart with certain policies. The CDC recommends that schools spacing for seating/desks should be at least 6 feet apart. Why would you folks think it's okay to put little humans who do not have great hygiene skills closer to one another, then what's demanded at all stores for ALL ages? It's crazy to think that you would be okay with this. Not only are you saying it's okay for the kids and teachers to be at least 3 feet apart, but you are also saying that it's not a necessity to wear a mask in class. When it is mandated that we must wear masks in public. It just doesn't make sense at all! Our keiki are our future and we are carelessly putting their lives in danger if we follow through with this plan. I beg of you, to not only think of the kids, but also please think of the families and loved ones they will be going home to. Please, do what is pono and make the change, so that everyone involved will stay safe. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Shannon Yano

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Gmail

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

Reopening of school

Amanda Tangonan-Miyataki <amandajoann@live.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:15 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I wanted to ask why will it not be mandatory for the students to wear a mask to school? If its mandatory to wear it everywhere else, it should be worn in class. Want normalcy, isnt that the new norm. We're trying to keep everyone safe. I'm for school opening up but it needs to be safe! It feels like it's being rushed to open up.Cant 6ft social distance between desks then something else needs to be figured out so it can be done!!!
Concerned parent if 2

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

Testimony

Mary Ann Doles <maryanndoles@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Mary Ann Doles. I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate in Ewa Beach. I am emailing 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.

As a seven-year teacher, I have learned many things from the field and my students. I enjoy my job and it was heartbreaking to not say goodbye to my 8th graders last school year because of this pandemic. However, I do understand the decision made because we have to think of the safety of our students, the teachers and staff. We are expected to open for the next school year but I am concerned about two things brought up that I believe would risk the health of my students, myself, fellow teachers and everyone at the school.

My first concern is in regard to wearing a mask. We ask that you please mandate wearing a mask in class. We were told that, as long as students are sitting down, they are not required to wear their masks. I believe that this brings risks to the students and to the teachers because there are still micro respiratory droplets that escape when anyone speaks. When both parties wear masks, the risk is lower.

My second concern is this 3ft distance between tables (students) and that this should be okay as long as students are facing the same direction. The DOE met with the HSTA and agreed upon the 6ft distance then we heard in the news that 3ft should be okay. Please mandate that the DOE adhere to a 6ft distancing in class as they agreed originally with HSTA. We are talking about students whose attention span lasts about 10 minutes. Also, sitting for a long time makes it difficult for them to stay in the same direction. They will be turning from side to side or will face their classmates and talk to them. The state asked people in the office and other work places to stay 6ft apart but why is it different for kids? This along with no mask because it's not really required will bring great risks to our students, teachers and staff in the school.

Please support us with our concerns. I believe that being with our students in person as they learn is much more meaningful than teaching them in front of a computer. However, we are risking the lives of our students and everyone in the school. Not only that, we have families at home and living together brings the same risk. Anyone in the community would be at risk because we're bringing people together who can be contracted with this virus and they're bringing it back to their families. The safety of everyone is important so we are reaching out to you for support.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I hope that you can understand our concerns and hear our voices in this matter.

Have a wonderful afternoon
Mary Ann Doles

Gmail

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

Plan A

Debbie Nunan <dnunanmaui@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:19 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Students need to be in class face to face. First graders need to be in school for their social well being & academic growth. Online requires a connection & parent guidance

Gmail

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

Social distancing in schools

David Esaki <esakid@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I ask that we please follow normalized standards of social distancing, and I agree with others that 3 feet between children in a classroom is too close. To bunch children closer together to maximize space would be reckless and shortsighted. Teachers have a hard enough job as it is. Please let's not subject them to unneeded risks and stress. Thank you!

Sincerely,
David Esaki, A concerned parent

Testimony

Lisa Nishihara <lisa_nishihara@momilanies.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony

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 Lisa Nishihara and I am a school teacher at Momilani Elementary School, Pearl City Complex, Leeward District.

I am not comfortable with spacing student seats three feet apart without masks. **This directly contradicts our agreement with the state** and 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.” 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. This very thought scares me.

I visit my in-laws 2-3 times a week. They are both in their late 80’s and have various health conditions. So I am very uncomfortable with having students placed only 3 feet apart and also having the option of NOT wearing a mask.

Why is it that the UH college system will be spacing their students 6 feet apart and the elementary and secondary public school system can space their students 3 feet apart? Six feet distance is required at Costco and restaurants. Why would it be different for elementary and secondary public school students and teachers? The same rules that apply to our UH college system and public, should also be followed in our elementary and secondary public schools.

For the health and safety of ALL people, please keep to the 6 feet social distancing in our public schools. Please keep our students, teachers, and our families safe!

Thank you!

July 7, 2020

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.

Sincerely,
Kelli Kaanaa
Grade 4 Teacher
Holomua Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

Charlotte Godfrey-Romo <charlotte.romo30@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

At the top of the email, 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.

I am submitting testimony 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 Charlotte Godfrey-Romo, I am a science teacher at Kea‘au High and I am very concerned about the plan, it goes against the CDC‘s recommendations and puts our community at risk.We need to abide CDC‘s 6 foot rule and mask rule. Students need to wear masks or face shields in the classroom. I think we should offer sanitizer as they walk in and at the desks (High School/Middle School) so they can wipe it down before sitting down.
Today, Hawai‘i reported the most cases in one day since the start of the epidemic. Hawai‘ians and Pacific Islanders are at greater risk than the general public. I am originally from Arizona and I am seeing the devastation that is happening to the Navajo communities there.
Please do not allow a plan that is less than what our HSTA contract with the state, and the CDC recommend. If the virus spikes, change plans and go online, be strategic, listen to science. We have a chance to learn from other places and keep Hawai‘i safe.
Mahalo,
CHarlotte Godfrey-Romo

--
Charlotte Godfrey-Romo
1445 Waianuenue Ave.
Hilo, HI 96720
(520) 907-4553

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kelsey Ramirez <kelsram808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:26 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 Kelsey Komoto and I am speaking as a special teacher from Hickam Elementary, who is considered high-risk due to being 20 weeks pregnant.

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. From my eight years of experience, I can anticipate my special education students having difficulty refraining from turning to talk to their peers, touching each other, sharing supplies, and keeping their desk in the same position throughout the day. Being separated six feet or more would serve as a greater reminder that social distance and necessary for all of us to be safe in our classroom.

Typically, in special education we have small group instruction, therefore less students in a classroom. But with special education numbers on the rise, classrooms can reach up to 15 or more. Again, this concerns me due to some our special needs students who may not understand or comply with social distancing independently.

With these difficulties in special education classrooms, I cannot imagine how general education classrooms of up to 28+ will maintain safety. 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 high-risk 20 weeks pregnant woman I am extremely concerned about the 3ft distancing and masks being optional. Mayor Caldwell of Honolulu made wearing masks mandatory in all public areas on July 3, 2020. I don’t understand why this does not apply to our PUBLIC schools that we serve. The CDC has found that pregnant women are more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit and to be put on mechanical ventilators than non-pregnant women. With current DOE guidelines and no current vaccine, I feel that I am not only putting my life at risk, but my unborn child, my husband, my elderly parents, as well as the rest of my family. I care about my students, my school, and the community I serve. I want to keep both ohanas safe.

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,

Kelsey Komoto

Gmail

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

6 feet

Kalen Kitagawa <ntkyk64@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:28 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We need to keep our teachers and students safe at 6 feet distance. I've been working at my school's Summer Hub and desks are 6 feet apart. Students have learned how to maintain the 6 feet distance and it has kept my class as well as myself safe and healthy. It is reasonable to ask for something that we are required to do in our community and out in public. Keep our schools open and safe by requiring 6 foot distancing.

Aloha,
Kalen Kitagawa
Wheeler Elem. School
Curriculum Coordinator

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Susana Román <namoranasus@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Susana Román, I'm a Special Education teacher at Kailua Intermediate 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. As we all know clusters are popping up all over the island Dr. Green said "now more than ever it's vital that people:

- Wear a face covering when outside the home;
- Stay at least 6 feet from others to prevent the spread of the virus;
- Limit gatherings to "ohana bubbles" or no more than 10 people."

However, The Hawaii DOE is only requiring 3 feet distancing and lax on mask usage, putting our students and our communities at the highest risk based on the Center for Disease Control guidelines. I implore you to mandate 6 feet space between student desks, masks, and provide support for schools to monitor students' health.

Respectfully,
Susana Román

--
Susana Román

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sandra Bukoski <sandrabukoski@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this concerns:

I, Sandra Bukoski, 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 mother of three children who attend Wheeler Elementary, Wheeler Middle School, and Leilehua High School. In addition, I teach at Wahiawa Middle School.

I understand that HIDOE released guidance that said spacing students 3 feet apart without masks was acceptable. I understand this 3 feet rule is acceptable when students are all facing in the same direction. I disagree. The CDC guidelines state students should be seated 6 feet apart. Disregarding the CDC guidelines put students and teachers at unnecessary risk, and I'm afraid such actions are the result of putting budget over the lives of educators and students.

First, it is unrealistic for students to remain facing all in the same direction for the duration of a class or school session. Students will naturally turn in their seats toward the speaker (teacher or student). They will turn to gather supplies from their backpacks. They will turn as they move out of their seats to see the teacher or turn in assignments. They will turn in their seats to get comfortable from sitting in the same classroom period after period. Foremost, students will often naturally turn their heads to cough or sneeze. Their germs will carry over to the next student beside them, and their germs will spread to neighboring desks and supplies. Even if the student manages to remain facing forward while covering their mouth, some germs will still spread to the student in front of them. Three feet is simply not enough distance to protect one student from another student's cough or sneeze— especially without a mask.

In addition, the more space provided between students, the less likely students will break social distancing rules. The space serves as a visible reminder to overcome their natural inclinations. Students are children, not robots. Students naturally want to socialize with their friends. I am teaching summer school, and it is difficult for some students to remember to keep their hands to themselves and not to share food. This is especially true for students who sit closer together. The younger or less mature student will have a more difficult time to remember to keep social distancing unless distance is created for them. There are also students with ADHD who will have trouble following guidelines, and sitting them less than 6 feet from their nearest peer will set these students up to fail social distancing guidance. They will fidget, stretch, reach, and lean in toward their closet buddy. If you want to create a safe, learning environment for students, then you must have at least 6 feet of space between students and not anything less.

I am also concerned for my family, fellow teachers, and students who are high risk. I have a child with asthma. He is prone to respiratory disease and has taken months to battle colds and bronchitis EVERY year. In addition, one of my daughters and I have recently recovered from bacteria pneumonia, and according to my doctor, I am more susceptible to respiratory infections now more than ever. How many more students and teachers have health conditions that put them at greater risk with Covid-19? How many students and teachers may not know they have underlying conditions? By relaxing safety standards, more teachers and parents will have to make hard decisions between livelihood and living.

We should ask, "Who will teach our students when there isn't enough educators because they are sick?" AND "What are we teaching our students when we take shortcuts and overlook standards?" We watch the news and see people suffering because some people do not have the strength and fortitude to do what's right when things get tough or when they feel uncomfortable. Now is our time for us to stand up and teach Aloha. We can show through actions we care for each other and will do what's right even if it means we must struggle. There's so much we can do— stretch the budget, get rid of State testing for 2020-2021, shorten the number of days students are required inside the classroom to accommodate social distancing, teach virtual classes— but let us not sacrifice the health and lives of real people.

We teachers have sacrificed our time, money, and health to educate students through the years. Please do not ask us to sacrifice our lives and the lives of our families for a shallow 3 feet social distancing rule. I rather be 6 feet apart, than 6 feet under... or worse, see a child, my own child, needlessly suffer or die. The thought alone causes great stress, and I believe more teachers and families will feel some relief if HIDOE makes decisions that acknowledges and respects our real concerns. We should be acting as one, as an Ohana. I ask you please modify the 3 feet rule to 6 feet with masks.

Regards,

Sandra Bukoski
Mother and Teacher

Testimony

Nancy Byun <n.byun@live.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:31 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education,
Please don't contradict what the CDC is outlining as safe practices for social distancing. 3 ft is not enough. Why is the BOE/DOE contradicting what the CDC has put in place? This brings teachers and staff, and students and parents to believe that the BOE/DOE does not think of our health and lives as a priority. Your plan cannot ensure the safety of our students, teachers, and staff, and our families.

I may not be at high-risk, but my grandfather, and mother are high-risk and both have their own slew of medical issues. I am their primary care-taker and I cannot risk my health and accidentally or unknowingly infect them and cause them to die. I am sure that many other teachers have the same concern. I am sure many parents also have the same concern. I am sure that health compromised students are also concerned. We should all be concerned for our families and friends, and our entire community of Hawaii.

The BOE/DOE has had so much time to plan and train the teachers, staff, and parents for distance learning. We were waiting since mid-March for direction, and yet the DOE waited until July 2nd to announce its "plan". Without proper training or planning, how are we expected to learn about distance learning and teach moment to moment while school is in session?

Back in April, I applauded the DOE when we were told that "Hawaii's public schools are expected to stay shut until COVID-19 is no longer spreading in the community, defined as four weeks with no new cases." Where is this mentality now? How can 3 feet between students and teachers be conceivable after a statement like this was released? I urge you to mandate the 6ft rule, at the very least, but also to postpone the opening of schools for the safety of everyone. Just in the first week of July, up to today, the 7th, we've had 155 new cases reported. And this is without school in session. Once schools open and hundreds of people are gathering in schools, how will you folks ensure that the rise in cases will not be connected to us? How will you ensure the safety of all the teachers, students, staff, parents, and relatives so that don't end up as a statistic on the daily Covid case report?

Please keep our health and lives in mind as a priority. I understand that the academic well-being of our students is also important, but how will teachers teach if we are ill or hospitalized, or dead? How will students learn if they are not healthy? How will parents support their children if they aren't functioning well enough to give that support?

Please keep all of us in mind.

Aloha,
Nancy Byun

Gmail

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

Testimony

Reid Robinson <reidrobinson78@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:31 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Reid Robinson, and I am the K-1 school counselor at Lihikai 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.

Facial coverings should be mandated for students and staff. Change the wording from "should wear masks" to "must wear masks." Wearing masks should not be an option. It is a necessity for the safety and welfare of our students and staff members.

The spacing between students should be in accordance with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which is six feet apart. The CDC does not indicate any allowance for three feet spacing in settings such as classrooms. The following information is a quote taken directly from the CDC's website on social distancing:

"Keep Distance at Events and Gatherings: It is safest to avoid crowded places and gatherings where it may be difficult to stay at least 6 feet away from others who are not from your household. If you are in a crowded space, try to keep 6 feet of space between yourself and others at all times, and wear a cloth face covering. Cloth face coverings are especially important in times when physical distancing is difficult. Pay attention to any physical guides, such as tape markings on floors or signs on walls, directing attendees to remain at least 6 feet apart from each other in lines or at other times. Allow other people 6 feet of space when you pass by them in both indoor and outdoor settings."

The quote above should be enough to guide you in your decision on the spacing between students and the guidelines on facial coverings. Students should be six feet apart (not three feet apart), and facial coverings should be required—not an option.

Sincerely,
Reid Robinson

Gmail

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

Masks & Distancing

Angela Paini <painiangela@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:33 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a Hawai'i teacher I am in favor of 3 feet distancing (or less)! I also am in favor of masks being taken off whenever safe and possible. Health and safety are important, but so is our ability to teach using effective practices and to create safety and normalcy for our students!

Masks and six feet apart is an unrealistic and damaging expectation for our schools.

Hawai'i teachers want our classrooms to be the normal, culture of learning that we love. Not a sterile, old school, ineffective classroom that ignores pedagogy and best practice for "safety"

Thanks,
Angela West

Gmail

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

Testimony

Donald Russell <dpk4@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi I am a teacher at Daniel K Inouye elementary school 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. My name is Donald Russell and I am ready to start my 5th year of teaching 2nd grade. I think the proposed plan is great! HSTA has been urging members to testify against 3 ft of social distancing and mandatory masks but I strongly disagree with their stance. Three feet should be more than reasonable for students and staff to properly distance themselves in one classroom and masks should not be mandatory. Accommodating six feet of spacing and wearing masks would greatly infringe on teachers abilities to deliver quality instruction to students. Collaboration would be nearly impossible for students 6 ft apart, allowing for 3 ft spacing would let ideas and voices to be shared much easier. Wearing masks, as mentioned in the plan, would take away from nonverbal communications shared through facial expressions. Students have already missed so much time from their learning, nearly 3 months since March. Having to accommodate 6 ft rules and mandatory masks would only keep students from closing their learning gap. I strongly support the proposed plans and guidelines because they understand the teaching difficulties that would be caused with mandatory masks and 6ft spacing.

Gmail

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

Students need 6 ft distance in classrooms and Madatory masks

Sharleen Asada <asada.sharleen@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,
I am a tenured Gr 1 teacher with many concerns with the opening plans of this school year. The safety and health of students and teachers should take precedence over all in school. Therefore students need the same 6 ft accommodations as any adult work place. Young students are incapable of facing forward for 6 hrs in the classroom. 3 ft distance in classroom will put every family at risk as students turn to face each other. Please take into consideration there are many multigenerational homes in Hawaii.
Also student number in class should be 6-8 per group to minimize exposure and management of student safety procedures. It would be impossible for a teacher to oversee 20 or more students at any moment.
Students and teachers should be given the same consideration as any workplace environment.
Student and teacher lives matter.
Thank you.
Sharleen Alvarado
Gr 1 teacher
Ala Wai School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lori Ann Koyama <lori.koyama@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:35 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 Lori Koyama and I work at Lahaina Intermediate School. I am also a parent of a kindergartener at Princess Nahienaena school.

I am not comfortable with the 3 foot distance rule. Many of the children that attend the Lahaina schools come from families that work in the hospitality industry. That means that they will be in direct contact with visitors upon their arrival. I am not confident that the State can keep up with travelers coming into the state to ensure that they are quarantining. There is already a spike without travelers once we open up Hawaii the cases will continue to rise.

At the current time regardless of what the LG says, depending on what State a visitor comes from, you are not able to get tested unless you are showing symptoms. The spikes across the country are once again causing shortages of tests. This means less people will test prior to coming to Hawaii. The visitors and residents that are in the 14 day quarantine are not even abiding to the rules and nothing is happening to them. Yes we hear of one or two that get caught but the majority of them are breaking quarantine because NO ONE is checking on them!

I live in a multi generational family. My father is 74 years old with multiple medical issues, I CANNOT afford to bring home covid. My daughter has a genetic disorder that puts her in the high risk category. It is documented that the virus spreads THE MOST while in doors. Well a classroom is IN DOORS! 3 feet is highly unacceptable. It goes against CDC guidelines. Furthermore most classrooms do not have single desks as teachers have made the move towards larger tables to encourage group and collaborative work. the 3 ft distance all facing the same way is impossible in most classrooms on our campus.

I am asking that you follow the CDC guidelines with regards to social distancing, wearing masks, and not being indoors. Schools will be the super spreaders of the virus if we reopen under the current guidelines.

Sincerely,

Lori Koyama

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lance Nishihara <lance_nishihara@momilanies.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:36 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 Lance Nishihara and I am a School Counselor at Momilani Elementary school, Pearl City complex, Leeward District.

I am not comfortable with spacing student seats three feet apart without masks. **This directly contradicts our agreement with the state** and 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.” 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. This very thought scares me.

I have also watched several reputable Medical Doctors online demonstrating the use of facial coverings (masks) at various distances...2 ft, 4 ft., and 6 ft. At 6ft with no facial covering, there is considerable germs spread if someone coughs, talks, or sneezes. With a mask at 6 ft. it is very minimal. The 3 ft. that is being proposed truly is frightening and poses a high risk of passing germs to teachers and students in a confined space such as the classroom. I ask you...would you want to be sitting in that type of condition?

I have two elderly parents that do not live in my household but my wife and I, plus my sister provide weekly assistance which includes doctor visits and food shopping. My parents are 88 and 86 and my dad currently has Prostate cancer and my mother has breathing issues and a heart murmur. I am very concerned as I serve the entire school population and my wife serves as a reading resource teacher for our school...coming in contact with many teachers, classrooms, and students. Having students placed only 3 feet apart and also having the option of NOT wearing a mask totally scares me and will put many at risk.

Why is it that the UH college system will be spacing their students 6 feet apart and the elementary and secondary public school system can space their students 3 feet apart? Why would it be different for elementary and secondary public school students and teachers? The same rules that apply to our UH college system and public, should also be followed in our elementary and secondary public schools. Also 6 feet distancing is required at Costco, restaurants, and various other stores with "Face Masks Required" posted before entering their premises.

For the health and safety of ALL people, please keep to the 6 feet social distancing in our public schools. Please keep our students, teachers, and our families safe.

Thank you!

Testimony

Kimberly Pennell <kbpennell28@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:37 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kimberly Lauzon and I am a teacher at Mililani High School; I have daughters who attend both Mililani Uka Elementary and Mililani Middle School. Yesterday morning I offered my testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation of DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Since that time, in just over 24 hours, there have been 50 new covid-19 cases reported, and I would like to add on to my original testimony.

I am writing to ask you to not only mandate that there be 6 feet of spacing between desks, as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which was agreed upon by the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) and the state just last week, and but to consider a return to what was considered safe just in April, which was four weeks at zero cases. If people knew we couldn't go back to school until we reached this benchmark, maybe they would be more committed to making safe choices instead of sending us back into classrooms so the virus spreads between students, families, and the community.

As a mother, I am afraid to send my daughters into these enclosed spaces where they will be in close quarters with others, (and I have no idea how careful the others are being) and as a teacher, I am afraid of contracting the virus from my students and bringing it home to my own family.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Lauzon

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

MoonGirlTingz <emmakoa1@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:37 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 Emma Koa and I am a teacher at Malama Honua PCS. I do not feel safe at all returning to work with the current conditions. There are no steps that can be put in place to make me feel safe returning for work EXCEPT to allow teachers to opt out of face to face instruction if they or people in their household are immunocompromised or at higher risk for contracting covid.
I feel strongly that we are being pressured and guilted into choosing to feed our families OR keep our families safe and that should not be the case.

Do better.

Na‘u,
Emma Koa

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kathlene Suzuki <kathlene.suzuki@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kathlene Suzuki and I am a general education kindergarten teacher at Makalapa Elementary in the Central District. I am testifying on behalf of Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I live with my aging parents who are most at risk to COVID-19. I would like you to reconsider the 3 feet distance and make it 6 feet. I also need to ask for masks being worn in school classrooms. I know that the CDC guidelines are recommending this and plead with you to keep these guidelines in our public schools. I would not feel safe teaching in an environment that is not following the CDC guidelines and my parents would become the victims because of it.

Sincerely,
Kathlene Suzuki

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Gmail

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

School reopening safety

Randall <randallokimoto@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:39 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

My name is Randall Okimoto. I've been a teacher in the DOE for over 20 years. I'm writing in regards to concerns that I have on the DOE's policy for reopening our schools, specifically, the 3ft. rule of physical distancing in the classroom and optional mask wearing in our schools. In the best interest of safety for our faculty, staff, and students, we should adhere to the CDC guidelines of 6ft distancing and wearing masks when out in public.

Moreover, our state has now mandated that when out in public, whether outdoor or INDOOR, everyone must wear a mask & stay 6 ft or more apart. The 3ft distance guidance for our public schools and the ok not to use a mask while in the classroom contributes to the confusion of the public and compromises the health and safety of our students and teachers.

Therefore, I am asking you to change the guidance from 3ft to 6ft distance in the classroom and to wear a facial covering in the classroom, before our public schools can reopen.

Sincerely,
Randall Okimoto
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Vanessa Lokan <sanchez.v22@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kakou,

I am testifying on discussion item IV(A): Presentation of the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

My son is a student at Moanalua Elementary School.

Classrooms must be configured to allow 6 feet between each person. Students who are not spaced apart are at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

Sending our son to school feels like I am sending him to battle, unprepared and unsupported. Yes, "in-person learning" is very important but at what cost? Allowing 3ft of space as long as everyone faces forward is laughable. What elementary kid is going to face forward all day, short of using fear tactics reminding them of the risk they are taking every day for just being in school?

While CDC says the risk of children contacting COVID-19 are rare, there is also a chance that they are asymptomatic and can transmit to not just their peers, but to their teachers and other administrators, and then to their families when they come home. Or worse, contract COVID-19 and experience multisystem inflammatory syndrome and other complications themselves.

We have diligently followed all stay at home orders. During the last school year, we worked hard to stay on top of subjects and assignments, keeping in touch with classmates and teachers virtually, safely. We shut down sports activities, we didn't leave our house, we stopped seeing family and friends. What was that all for if we're just going to throw it all away this fall?

I can't imagine the magnitude of stress and pressure you might be under to find a solution for all of this. At the very least, uphold the agreement with HSTA to require 6ft of distancing between ***everyone,*** students and teachers.

Please do not sacrifice my son, his classmates, or his teachers. It's not worth it.

Aloha,
Vanessa Lokan

Opening of schools

Cai <cai_mir@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:40 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To the Board of Education:
I am extremely concerned about the upcoming reopening of schools. This is less than a month away and Hawaii is seeing a spike in cases and there are plans to reopen to tourism the same week that school begins. As you are aware many of our parents work in the hospitality industry, in restaurants, bars, hotels, retail shops, and other tourist attractions and services. This put their children and our students at risk for infection for COVID-19. With the current guidelines for community movement we are seeing a rise in infectious diseases such as colds and flu. We have been warned that COVID-19 is much more infectious than these more common illnesses.
Our principal just told us that we will open our school to all students, all day, every day with 3 ft distance between desks. We are an elementary school PreK-5 with approximately 450 students. Our class sizes are too large to allow for more than 3 ft between desks. As a special education teacher I will need to service students in 4 different classrooms which means that I will be exposed to many students throughout the day. I am two years from retirement and have an autoimmune disease. I have regularly followed all of the guidelines to stay healthy. My children and grandchildren do not need to see me get sick.
Of course, I would love to see all the students return; distance learning was very difficult for teachers and a hardship on students and families but what an injustice and disservice it will be to our community if we open our schools while this disease is not contained. I see many who are not taking guidelines seriously. When I walk my dog in the evening I see people in my neighborhood having parties. I have seen people in public places with masks pulled down and not adhering to 6 ft social distancing. We cannot know what our students and families are doing outside of school nor can we mandate them to follow the Governor's orders. Please do not sacrifice us to the economy! Rethink this plan!
Sincerely submitted,
Catherine Davis
Special Education Teacher
Kamali`i Elementary
Kihei, Maui

Gmail

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

3 ft testimony

kahealani moniz <kanoelehua2003@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi my name is Kahealani Tabucbuc. I am a mommy of 4 soon to be 5, I'm due early end of August.

I am also a teacher. Hearing that we may start school with 3 ft distancing hurts my heart. I cannot get sick, my kids cannot get sick. I have a large family who will then get torn apart due to the need of quarantining ...

Please do not allow this 3 ft rule.. let's start school with distant learning. We missed a whole quarter last year. Let's use the whole first quarter as a review of previous grades instruction. Let's start planning now.

PLEASE NO 3 ft distancing...

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Alena Wong <lenawong151@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:44 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 Alena Wong and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Alvah Scott Elementary School.

First of all, as we start planning for the new school year, I am not comfortable about this 3 feet distance rule in the public schools? Sure, it's important for students to get back to school in person, but it should be while using a 6 feet distance rule. I don't think this is possible! Then, you have to think about lower grades (PreK to 2), which is where I teach. Do you think they will abide by this rule anyway? Three, or six, it won't matter to them...they are just naturally sociable and they will seek each other in and out of the classroom!

Next, with the new higher spikes happening randomly, I'm thinking we should rethink the opening of schools and continue to do online schooling (distance learning). I'd like to propose that we start the year on Aug. 4, face to face with half of our students for an official meet and greet, for half the day, and then do the same with the other half of our students, again only for half the day.
Then, for the rest of the month, we do distance learning with our students and provide packets for those without a device and/or internet connection.
Then, we gradually do a track system where we have A/B groups coming to school face to face, for at least twice a week. On Fridays, our special needs, EL population, and Tier-1 population will come in for an EXTRA day of face to face learning.

Third, relaxing the mask recommendations by the CDC is not what was agreed upon with our Union. No wearing a mask, or having the choice to wear a mask endangers the health and safety of our keiki, teachers, and school community. This should be a mandate or a school law to have everyone wear a mask or face shield while in and out of the classroom.

Another point I need to express is that all teachers should be supplied with necessary safety tools to use in their classrooms (should we need to be in school). I strongly feel that the DOE should provide non-contact thermometers for ALL teachers to use each day. The schools should provide batteries when needed. The DOE should also provide each teacher with a plexiglass screen to place on his/her desk. The DOE should also provide teachers with face shields, not masks, so that each child can see the true expression of his/her teacher and will be able to see his/her mouth when speaking. All schools should be provided with hospital-grade cleaning supplies and hand-sanitizers so teachers and students will feel safe when they are on campus.

As our DOE leaders, I humbly ask you all to reconsider the social distancing guidelines in school, the start of the school year and how we should do it, and to consider providing teachers with at least a non-contact thermometer to use for their students. Education is important to me, but the ***health of others*** is paramount and takes precedence over anything else.

Mahalo Nui Loa for taking the time to read my thoughts and opinions.
With much respect and Aloha,
Alena

Gmail

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

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A) 6 feet NOT 3

ahuntemer@aol.com <ahuntemer@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:45 PM
Reply-To: ahuntemer@aol.com
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.

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for working with the HSTA to come up with a MOU that is largely workable. It was quite a shock to learn shortly after the MOU was shared that the Department intended to cast aside on a crucial aspect of the agreement and one which is pivotal to keeping our school and wider community safe.
The recommended distance between people to reduce the transmission of COVID is six feet, not three, see below.
Please quickly clarify that the distance between people will be six feet and make sure that there is coherence in policy and communication on important issues as we move forward.
Please also consider changing the language from "should wear masks" to "will wear masks" in and out of the classroom.

This year our students are expected to do difficult things, but we must all do difficult things to protect our community. Teachers are now officially frontline workers. The threat of contracting COVID at work puts an enormous extra burden of stress on us. We are already stretched to the limit with the extra planning and implementation involved in this school year.
We need your support, the students and entire community need your support.
Mahalo,
Angela Huntemer MEd
Ka'a'awa Elementary

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

What is social distancing?



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.
Social distancing should be practiced in combination with other everyday preventive actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including wearing cloth face coverings, avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands, and frequently washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Kathleen Nishimura <kathynishi@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,
I will not allow my children to attend class without fully socially distancing themselves by 6ft!

I also feel that “ALL” children need to have their temperatures checked prior to attending mass.

Sincerely,
Kathy Nishimura

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Reopening schools

laurie <lkatagiri@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:48 PM
Reply-To: "lkatagiri@yahoo.com" <lkatagiri@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

As you discuss the reopening of schools in August, please keep foremost in your hearts and minds that we are dealing with people young and older and with a virus that is deadly.
Reopening schools must provide the best efforts possible to protect the health and welfare of everyone in the school setting.
I went in to my room to see how distancing would look like and found that anything less than a 6' distance would make me very uncomfortable. Everyone in the room would also need to wear a face cover. Everyone who enters the room would have to disinfect their hands as well as wipe down their desk. I am saying that 6' distancing, face covers, sanitization supplies are basic 'must haves' to give us (students and teachers) a better chance at keeping ourselves in a low risk environment.
Thank you for your giving this your serious consideration.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony for distancing

Amanda Craig <acraig@solomonelementary.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:50 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am an RT who teaches PK-5th. I see 750+ students.

I am already nervous about returning to teach. Measures need to be in place that students are able to social distance at the CDC required 6 ft.

I don't know how HIDOE or schools even came to consider 3 ft when medical and science professionals have stated 6 feet is the minimum distance that needs to be enforced to ensure good health and safe learning/teaching practices.

All students and teachers also should be required to wear masks.

Please take this into consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Amanda Craig

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Darin Ujimori <darin.ujimori@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony on Discussion item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's Comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

Hawaii Board of Education Members,

My name is Darin Ujimori, a middle school teacher at Washington Middle, and I fall into the category of 30%-40% of teachers that are in the high-risk category to develop/have complications from Covid-19. I am currently 53 years old and have the three main comorbidity issues that can result in complications if infected with Covid-19. In fact, my wife who is also a middle school teacher at Mililani Middle, also falls in this category. We live with my in-laws, who both fall into the high-risk group, both of my parents fall in this group, and my son, a Junior at Roosevelt High, has sinus issues that may put him in the high-risk category. We also have a 2nd grader at Manoa School.

I am deeply troubled and disappointed by the recent announcement by the HIDOE and Superintendent concerning the opening of schools. Particularly after the HSTA and State Board was able to reach an MOU that was at least in-line with the CDC guidelines for safely opening schools. While the two most troublesome points of contention are concerning the physical distancing guidelines and the wearing of masks, I think that there are other factors that are not being taken into consideration. Three of these are:

- Each school has certain geographical/geopolitical considerations that need to be addressed. Our school, for instance, is located just 1 mile from Waikiki. A large number of our parents work in and around Waikiki, or involved in the tourist industry. With positive cases on the rise just from community spread, we will undoubtedly see it rise even more when we begin opening for tourism on August 1st, thus increasing the chance that the virus could be brought to our campus. This could affect our families and their children that attend our school, which in turn could affect our teachers.
- Many teachers in my position may take the stance that health and safety is the most important issue, and will not place their own lives and the lives of their family at stake, and will simply choose to either find a way to take a leave of absence or just quit altogether. If you think of it in terms of that very real possibility, opening schools right now to in-person classes does not make sense. We will not be in a position to open due to an increase of the teacher shortage - already a systemic issue.
- Both my wife and I are teachers, and as mentioned before we have two school aged children that attend public school. Any one of us could become infected and bring it home to infect the senior citizens in our household. Did I mention that four out of the six of us are at risk for severe complications if we contract Covid?

Concerning physical distancing - Not enough consideration has been given that it will be impossible for elementary school age children and middle school age children to maintain physical distancing of any kind. No one teacher will be able to monitor this 100% of the time for their class. How will it be monitored outside of class during breaks (no school has enough support staff to accomplish this). How can you realistically expect the students (such as in our neighborhood that walk to and from school daily) to maintain distancing once school starts?
The thought from the DOH that students will keep facing forward in a classroom when spaced side to side is nothing but a pipe dream. If you have ever spent any time in a classroom at any level you would know that even for high schoolers this prospect is difficult at best, and gets progressively worse as you enter middle schools and elementary schools. Many scientists today are admitting that even 6 feet might not be far enough as there is growing evidence that this virus is spread via airborne particles primarily, that can stay suspended for extended periods of time (think, walking through an are that someone had just smoked in, and still being able smell the smoke from the cigarette).

Ultimately, I am not comfortable with returning to in-person instruction with the current situation our state and country is in. I am preparing for distance learning (during the Summer break I might add) and should be ready to start by early August, but it is quite a learning curve associated with this. Most of us were never trained to do this effectively, but we're learning.

I strongly feel that this issue is becoming politicized to the point that we are now making decisions because they are affecting the economy. We in education are being trivialized to the point of truly becoming nothing more than "glorified day-care". Are you willing to sacrifice the health and well-being of 13,000+ teachers and staff, and hundreds of thousands of students because the pressure is being put on to open the economy. We can't continue doing distance learning forever, I realize that. But I believe we have to do the smart and prudent thing and approach this very cautiously.

I implore you to take a step back and slow the opening of schools down until we know how opening up tourism will affect the case numbers, and the overall safety of our community as a whole.
Here is a true anecdotal story that occured at our school in January that you probably haven't heard: Just after we returned to school from Winter Break, a student of ours came back to Hawaii from his vacation and was showing symptoms of Covid, although at the time it was not real clear what those would be. Basically he had a high fever, cough, and body aches, the basic Covid symptoms. He was quickly taken from class to the health room and DOH was notified. You see, the thing was, this student returned from his vacation in Wuhan China. At the time, however, DOH really didn't know what they were dealing with because it was so new. He returned to class a few days later. When we teachers were finally able to talk to each other just before the end of school, we found that many on the campus reported being sick with strange symptoms, and that it had apparently spread very quickly. Many, many students, much more than usual, were also out sick, some for extended time. We will probably never really know if we were exposed to Covid during the months of January to March, but the point really is, that this is how fast this could spread at a school. If you think community spread from gatherings such as church services and parties are bad, it would be far worse at a school given the consideration that many of the students could be non-symptomatic carries that would be coming in close contact with the very sector of people we are trying to protect; those older ones and those with underlying health conditions. Something to really give thought to.

Thank you so much for your time, but please do the right thing, we are counting on you. Trust that teachers will find a way to make distance learning work for the time being, till we can truly safely go back to seeing students in person. We all all dearly miss our students and can't wait to see them, but only if it is safe.

Mahalo and thank you again for your time,

Darin Ujimori
Washington Middle School Band
1633 S. King St.
Honolulu, HI 96826
Tel: 973-0177

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Anna Harstad <fyaflygirl@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Anna Harstad. I'm a second grade teacher at Kalihi Waena Elementary School in Kalihi 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 feel that it is too soon to open schools when the cases of Covid-19 numbers are still increasing.

As a teacher, I'm not comfortable with being in the classroom where it is not guaranteed for everyone to maintain the distance of 6 ft. and without masks.

If it's required to wear a mask and to stay 6 ft. apart in public, it should apply to school settings and everywhere else. No exceptions. Believe me, when I set up my classroom this year, I'm going to try my best to have 6 ft. between everyone's desks and will protect my face.

I don't like feeling that my well-being and my students' well-being is at risk just for the sake of re-opening schools. If we are to get past Covid-19 and return to our normal state, we have to be smart.

I don't agree that it's smart to say that it's ok to be 3 ft. apart facing the same direction without a mask in an environment with more than 10 people for a prolonged time period.

As a teacher, I've always been concerned about my students' health and my own. I'm sure you never felt happy after being coughed and sneezed on.

Thank you for your time,
Anna Harstad

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com <mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:53 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha BOE Members,

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 Misty Tsukayama and I am a Student Services Coordinator at Eleele School on Kaua'i. I have children who attend Waimea Canyon Middle School and Waimea High School. My children go to my parents' house after school to wait until they are picked up. My parents are 73 years old and retired teachers. My husband is also a teacher at Koloa School. We are very invested in our schools and community on the Westside of Kaua'i.

I am writing to express my surprise and disappointment in the unexpected change from the agreement requiring 6 feet distancing between students in their seats to just 3 feet. A contractual agreement should not be taken lightly and altered without agreement from both parties. More importantly, it was disheartening to know that the pressure to reopen schools caused decision makers to put safety and health behind bringing students back to our campuses. How many of these decision makers are classroom teachers?

What good will come of reopening schools if a large number of staff, students and parents are concerned about their health when entering their schools. Beyond concern, what will happen if teachers and students do contract the virus because of the distancing allowances? How will we explain that despite CDC recommendations the State, and our schools, chose to put students closer than they should be? I do not want to be a part of that as the guilt would be unbearable. I do believe as much face to face learning as possible is the goal, but not at that expense anyone's well-being.

On a personal note, my children and I have asthma and allergies and my husband is diabetic. I will go work with the worry and anxiety of wondering if any or all of us might contract the virus. If 3 feet is the requirement for any of our schools my worry would likely be a distraction to my work. I think that would be the case for many school staff members and students as well. While some families may be extremely cautious, we know that not all are. Therefore, a child whose family follows all recommendations may be surrounded by other students only 3 feet away in all directions who may have gone to a crowded beach, attended a large gathering, interacted with people who traveled or are ill and the list goes on. I strongly believe the 3 feet of distancing will result in many more parents choosing not to send their children to school. I know that because I would be one of them. When all recommendations are to remain 6 feet apart, how can we allow children and teachers to have a lower standard of health precautions?

In addition to my family, I am concerned for our teachers who will be in those classrooms. While I am not a classroom teacher, I am an APC member and regardless of that, a classroom teacher advocate. Classroom teachers are the heart and engine of our schools. They need to be protected with the utmost care and consideration, not a lower standard than required in almost all other settings. It is incomprehensible how that decision was made when the CDC Guidelines still recommend 6 feet of distance for all people. Are we expendable? Less important? Test subjects? The decision is hurtful and harmful.

Please reconsider the decision to allow 3 feet of spacing between students facing the same direction. Consider the amount of times you turn your head to the right or left or look behind you. Then think about children and how much more they look and move around. If students next to each other lean toward the middle at the same time they will be barely a foot apart. If social distancing of 6 feet apart is the recommendation of health experts, then why would you consider anything less? While I understand there is a lot of pressure to reopen schools, please prioritize the PEOPLE over the system when making all decisions. The system will not work without all of us.

Respectfully,

Misty Tsukayama

Gmail

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

Social distancing

Marcella Fernandez <marcella_fernandez@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:53 PM
Reply-To: "marcella_fernandez@yahoo.com" <marcella_fernandez@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

let's be honest, not a damn thing is going to be accomplished woth your 3 foot rule. Science says MINIMUM six feet. Why is it you believe our teachers and students and their families deserve less? Let's be smart. 6 feet MINIMUM. Let's also be realistic about our ability to socially distance students. Do the right thing, its why we pay you.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

Marina Keizer <mkissawookiee@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
This is my 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 Marina Keizer. I am a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School and I have been a public school teacher in Kona for 15 years. My children attend Holualoa Elementary School and Kealakehe Intermediate School.

The current HIDOE reopening plan is rushed, unsafe, and will likely result in an increase of transmission of coronavirus. Every one of the four members of my family in my household is at high risk for coronavirus complications. I also help care for my 92 year old grandfather. **For the sake of my family, our many multi-generational households, and our Hawaii community, please demand that schools continue distance learning until the HIDOE commits to a safe reopening plan that requires 6 feet of social distancing and requires the wearing of masks by staff and students unless they have a doctor's note.**

Yesterday on 7/6, while speaking about increasing outbreaks, Bruce Anderson, Hawaii Department of Health Director said: "All of the recent clusters have been associated with people not wearing masks and not social distancing... They occured in workplaces and gyms, and social gatherings both inside and outside...our healthcare system could very well be overwhelmed."

Yet, the HIDOE, the HIBOE, HIDOH Director Bruce Anderson, all are planning to open up schools to hundreds of students and staff while recommending that students sit in classrooms 3 feet apart from each other and recommending that students and teachers NOT wear masks in the classroom. The HIDOE Return to Learn Health and Safety website states: "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." (http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/School-Reopening-Framework---Health-and-Safety.aspx)

Calling a classroom of children "a bubble" is ludicrous. Even by meeting with only half of the class at a time, it is exposing staff members to several dozen children, and by extension, their families-- this is not a "bubble." This situation would also be exposing each child and their family to the shared germs of dozens of students. Students will be eating possibly in an enclosed space (the HIDOE is visualizing that students will be eating in their classrooms) without their masks-- a situation similar to eating indoors at a restaurant, which we KNOW causes the spread of Coronavirus. Outside of the classroom, students will be exposed to other students and in close spacing in hallways, before school, after school, during recesses, not to mention in bathrooms where they will not be supervised. Let's even visualize the planned and unplanned events of fire drills (hundreds of kids standing front to back and shoulder to shoulder in order to fit onto a small parking lot or basketball court) and lockdown drills (everyone locked inside with doors and windows closed).

The Return to Learn- School Reopening Plan Principal Handbook
states that "Students will be allowed to sit no more than two persons per bench seat from home to school and back home again provided that they agree to wear a face mask on the bus. (pg 20)" A school bus bench seat will fit three small kindergarteners if they scrunch together. For larger children, sitting two to a seat means shoulder to shoulder. This is not social distancing or safe.

The Hawaii State DOE Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan Health and Safety Handbook states that schools should "Install physical barriers (e.g., shower curtain or flexible partitions) in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least six feet apart." (pg 4-5), should "ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible or limit the use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between each use." (pg 5). In a time of budget cuts and with the urgency put on schools to prepare/purchase necessary items before the determined start of school in three weeks, purchasing and implementing these plans is rushed and unlikely.

I urge you to demand that distance learning continue at all Hawaii Public Schools until the HIDOE commits to a safe reopening plan that requires 6 feet of social distancing and requires the wearing of masks by staff and students unless they have a doctor's note.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Marina Keizer
5th Grade Teacher
Holualoa Elementary School

Gmail

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

6 ft at least

Norma Combs <ncombslotus@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a special educator that is fearing for her life. I am over 60 with a weakened Immune system. How can I safely do my job when I cannot guarantee my safety. I am also a caretaker with 2 elderly parents. I need my income to take care of my family. If I can not worry about this., then can I successfully teach my students. But don't make me choose my life over my job. This is unacceptable. Once I can have no fear, then my students will have no fear. With our COVID numbers spiking, it is still not the time to reopen our schools and thus putting our students at risk. THINK, please. Safety over pressure to open will save lives. Mahalo

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ursula Costorio-Meyer <ursielehua@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a parent and a DOE employee my first and foremost concern is the health of every person (adult and child) returning back to school. I understand that the children will NOT be required to wear mask in the classroom. With the size of the classroom and the student bodies in there it will be very difficult to be 6ft apart, giving for the most part only 3ft apart. I really do not see how this is possible to stay safe that way. Elementary school children are the biggest carriers of the common cold. The little ones will "SNEEZE as they please", no matter how many times us adults remind them to cover their cough and sneezes. Then without wearing a face mask all day in school, sitting 3ft apart from the next student, that may be sick but we don't know it yet.....they go home to their family of, possibly an essential worker or multi generation household. What happens then?
Then we are being told that during lunch time they need to be sitting at a distance from each other, BUT they can play on the playground together? How does that make any sense?
How are we to make sure that every single child was temperature checked in the morning and that they are ok? If a child is found to be sick, does the families of the rest of the class need to be notified?
I am an EA/Cohort, we work One-to-One with the students and I know those students cannot keep the mask on thier face for too long without pulling it off. Will we all be supplied with plastic shield guards or do we need to buy them ourselves?

My child returning to HS, has 7 classes. Throughout the week he will be rotating between these classes with a whole bunch of different student bodies. The time the students go from one class to the next class is 5mins. How am I to be sure that all the desk and chairs from the previous class was wiped down and sanitized good?

Please take a look at every option possible to keep all DOE employees and students safe and healthy. Our numbers are raising again. I don't want our State to be known as careless to the World if we are just pushed back to the classrooms too soon and without careful consideration on everyones parts.

Mahalo
Ursula Costorio-Meyer

Gmail

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

The absurdity of the DOE's rules.

Ben Macklin <gb.macklin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:57 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I teach at Kealakehe High School in a setting that includes many children who live in high density environments. Additionally, there are many faculty members with underlying health issues. Among them are cancer survivors, heart attack survivors, diabetics, and several with breathing issues. Several of our faculty live with family members who are chronically ill. The DOE's policy of NOT requiring masks on students at all times violates every precaution taken in every state in the United States and every business in Hawaii. Additionally, the 3 foot distancing policy adopted by the DOE poses a risk since it also violates the Department of Health's protocols. Our students will be at greater risk to catch and transmit the virus to each other, their family members and our faculty and staff. Hawaii has done such a commendable job limiting the spread of the corona virus. Please reverse this police and require masks and 6' distancing.

Mahalo,

Ben Macklin
Kealakehe High School
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Testimony

Shiho Matsutaka <shiho.matsutaka@wilsonschoolhawaii.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 5:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Department of Education,

First of all, thank you very much to all DOE members for all the hard work you have been doing during this unprecedented time. This email is regarding 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 Shiho Matsutaka, and I teach Japanese to all Kindergarten to 5th graders at Wilson Elementary School. As one of the Specialty teachers at Wilson School, I meet all 575 students. There are seven other Specialty teachers on our campus who meet all 575 students. We teach one grade level per day, therefore, it makes us meet about 90+ students per day. I am extremely concerned regarding the decision that masks are not mandated inside the classroom and 6 feet distance between students' desks is not mandated by DOE.

Hawaii has seen a major spike of COVID-19 cases in recent days, and today we had 41 new cases. As Hawaii tourism is planning to open up at the same time school is starting, it strongly concerns me that our numbers of infection will increase. I am extremely concerned about the health and safety of our students and staff if we do not follow the CDC guidelines.

As I follow the news that is going on in Japan, there are schools that had to shut down due to the cluster cases within the school children. Not only in Japan, we see this happening around the world. I can see that this will happen in Hawaii also if we do not take the precautionary measures right now.

I am extremely concerned with children who will not wear any masks inside the classroom, and I don't feel safe working at my school. I live with my mom who is an elderly, and I don't want to transmit it to her if I get infected at work as I'll see 575 students. I also do not want my students to get infected from each other as their lives are very precious. I could be transmitting to another grade level without knowing. They have family members also when they go home.

I strongly ask that DOE will mandate the 6 feet distance between students' desks and wearing a mask inside of our classroom is required. Mayor Caldwell recently made a mandate to wear masks outdoors and indoor public spaces. DOE should be following what CDC and the mayor mandated. Students need to be required to wear a mask inside of our classroom to protect the health and safety of everyone on the school campus.

Lastly, we can't let any of our future leaders live in fear right now and lose any precious lives. School should be a place where students feel safe and they want to learn. I believe we are sending a wrong message to our children if we create our own guidelines than following what CDC and the mayor is recommending. We also can't lose any dedicated staff who came into this profession to make a difference. I have 20+ more years in this career, and I want to continue to teach for our keiki. They are our future, and we need to protect them as well as ourselves. As you meet this Thursday, please consider the health and safety of our students and staff a priority. Please make 6 feet distancing and wearing masks indoors a requirement. Thank you very much for your time reading this testimony.

Sincerely,
Shiho Matsutaka

Gmail

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

Testimony

Denise Sumida <deesumida@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:00 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 Denise Sumida and I am a teacher at Pearl Harbor Elementary.

I am asking the Board of Education to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with SIX feet between students desks. Realistically my young students will NOT sit facing the same way for the entire day. Moreover, the recommendation that elementary students need not wear a mask in the classroom while sitting only 3 feet apart is very unsafe. This would be unacceptable in offices in the private sector, in corporate meetings, and other business settings.

Our keiki and educators need to resume school in the best and safest manner possible. Please help us ensure there is adequate physical distancing in our schools.
Thank you,
Denise Sumida

Gmail

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

Testimony

Brooklynn Ramos <bnramos812@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:00 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.

The CDC defines social distancing as at LEAST a 6 foot distance. How can we call what they plan to do "distancing" if the plan is only 3 feet? How can we justify ignoring the only guidelines we have to go by in this VERY unprecedented time? We have to advocate for the safety of our students and our colleagues. How do your current ideas of 3ft suffice to make everyone safe?

We need to enforce the 6ft distance as written in the MOU. Also, if masks are required in every other indoor public setting, why can't we require them in schools? This is a very important factor in keeping all faculty, students, and family members safe during this global pandemic.

Sincerely,
Brooklynn Ramos
7th grade math
Kihei charter school

Gmail

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

Testimony

Allison Selika Drake <selikadrake@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:00 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,
I saw some scary information on the news last night. It was reported that COVID-19 micro-droplets could travel up to 30 feet!
Please reconsider the recommendation of 3 feet between students. Since we will have smaller classes I'm sure I can keep my second grade students at least 6 feet apart.
Thank you,
S.Drake
Grade 2 Pahoa elementary
Get Outlook for iOS

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shannon Jacob-kline <sjacob-kline@konawaenahigh.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:01 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 is unacceptable to even consider placing students any less that 6 feet apart per on CDC guidelines, which is the best scientific information we have about how the keep everyone safe. This, combined with mandatory masks for students and teachers, must be the way forward if we are to safely open schools and keep them open. This is the agreement that HSTA and BOE came to and this should be honored.

As a teacher who is in the age range for being most affected by this illness, I don't think it's at all civilized to ask me to risk my health to do my job. While it is important to provide students with in class instruction, no one's health or lives should be endangered to maintain a sense of normalcy that frankly no longer exists.

I implore you to please choose the correct and humane track by implementing CDC rules and embodying the spirit of aloha in keeping everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

Regards,
Shannon Jacob Kline
National Board Certified
English Teacher
Konawaena Hogh School
808-998-1760

Gmail

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

Testimony

Keala Kia <kealakia@ymail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:01 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education,
Respectfully, I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Dept Educations comprehensive plan to reopen schools plan for the 202-2021 school year. As a parent, I am in support of the mandatory mask usage inside of classrooms for students and teachers. In addition, I am in support of having BOE mandate/ make HIDOE adhere to a 6 ft. social distancing in ALL classrooms. HIDOE is only asking for 3 ft and this is unacceptable. Currently, CDC and WHO requires social distancing at 6 ft. apart. Mandating as stated above is for the health and welfare of our children, teachers and staff personnel. Thank you in advance for your consideration on this matter.
Sincerely,
Teri K K Savaiinaea

Gmail

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

Safety precautions in the classroom

Carole Mc Lean <carole.mc_lean@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:02 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 Carole McLean and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Nimitz 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 teach Special Education students with severe and mild learning disabilities who have difficulty staying in their seats and keeping their hands to themselves.

My classroom is half the size of a general education classroom. My school says that we can fit up to 8 - 10 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.

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,

Carole McLean Med, MAT

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BOE Testimony: Reopening of Schools

Jaimie Jenkins <jaimiekuikahi@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:03 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Name: Jaimie Yonemoto
Title: HIDOE Teacher and parent

Agenda item: VI. A. Reopening of schools

To: BOE Chairperson, Catherine Payne and Members of the Board

Position: OPPOSE reopening of schools on August 4, 2020 under the current guidelines

If we MUST return on August 4, 2020, the following should be guaranteed for the safety of the community:

- Students must be required to wear face masks in the classroom. Allowing students a choice will endanger the health and safety of their peers, faculty, and staff.
- Class sizes must be small enough to allow 6 feet in ALL directions while in the classroom. Any educator or parent understands that children do not only face in one direction for extended periods of time, so the current guidelines are inadequate.
- Determine one modified schedule for public schools so that parents with children in multiple schools may plan accordingly. Too many schedules will place an additional hardship on coordinating work schedules. If one child is home on Monday and Tuesday while another child is home on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, how can any parent be able to work?

Mahalo for your time

Gmail

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

Getting ready for school

Peggy Barretto <peggy_barretto@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:03 PM
Reply-To: "peggy_barretto@yahoo.com" <peggy_barretto@yahoo.com>
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a Special Education teacher working with children in an inclusion setting for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade. I am also 65 years old, as of today and considered a high risk candidate because I also have diabetes. We all want to go back to work but to put our children and ourselves in a non-safe environment is ridiculous. We are constantly reminded of 6 foot distancing, washing our hands, and wearing our masks, everyday with signs, commercials, and ads. Yet we have this ridiculous option for school, to face our children forward, with a 3 feet circumference around each child. A comment was made by Superintendent Kishimoto..." to see if this is viable"..and then when questioned by the news media about the 3 feet vs. 6 feet safety inquisition..she said, : "There is no communication from me that we are starting with 3 feet of space." It's amazing how no one wants to tell the truth! Today, July 7, 2020, the DOH talked about the "Ohana Bubble".My bubble will consist of a possible 90...children and adults! Is this safe for me? Would you put your Kupuna in this predicament? YOU are putting my life on the line..

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Testimony

Kacie Yamamoto <kmyamamo@usc.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:06 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

Hello. My name is Kacie Yamamoto and I'm a current sophomore at the University of Southern California and a graduate of Moanalua High School, c/o 2019. My mother works as a counselor in the public school system, and my brother is a rising junior at Moanalua High. I'm corresponding in response to recent news that desks in student classrooms this upcoming school year will be required to be a minimum of just three feet apart.

Social distancing requirements throughout the country call for a minimum of six. Therefore, I'm concerned about these requirements in schools, because they clearly do not adhere with current social distancing guidelines, which should be taken seriously now more than ever with the rise of COVID cases throughout the nation, including in Hawaii. It has also been proven, as through many cases and stories from across the country, that this disease is not one to be taken lightly and affects people of all ages and health conditions. It is irresponsible and foolish to choose not to uphold Hawaii's keiki to the same standards of proper health precaution that the rest of the country is held to.

USC has chosen to hold most of their classes online. While I recognize that this is relatively impossible for the Hawaii public school system, I think it is worth noting that USC, an institution that serves ADULT students, is choosing to protect their student body from COVID-19 in a way that the Hawaii school system is not. Students enrolled in Hawaii public schools are young and exposed to many different things/people when not in the classroom. They are susceptible, and they should not be allowed to congregate in such close proximity, even if they are "facing forward."

This is not the way that we should be treating and protecting Hawaii's children as they return to school this fall. Hawaii has remained relatively stable in terms of the second wave, but with this plan for desks 3 feet apart, I wouldn't be surprised if the second wave comes sooner than expected. For these reasons, I fully oppose this plan and believe that all student desks in Hawaii public school classrooms should be placed a MINIMUM of six feet apart, with masks or face coverings required for all students, faculty and staff.

I am prepared to voice my thoughts if you have any other questions regarding this opinion.

Best,
Kacie Yamamoto
University of Southern California
B.A. in Journalism, Minors in East Asian Area Studies and Psychology
Phone: (808) 729-2046 | Email: kmyamamo@usc.edu

Gmail

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

social distancing in schools with 6 feet

Ashley Neve <aneve@solomonelementary.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:07 PM

To whom it may concern.

Please note my concern about the proposal to social distance three feet in SY 2020,
we need to mandate at least 6 feet.

Also, How are we expected to maintain distance in lower elementary and maintain best safety practices while meeting the needs of our students who learn thru play.

Ashley Neve, MAT
Solomon Elementary School
Pre-K Special Education Teacher
Room B107
"Together Everyone Achieves More."

Testimony

tracy deshield <rainbow61@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE Members,

My name is Tracy Deshield. I teach at Kalama Intermediate School located in Makawao. 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.
It is my understanding that the board wants use to use 3ft social distancing in our classrooms. My question to you is, why do you think it is safe for our schools to use less social distancing than what the public is required? Why are we teachers and students being used as "sacrificial lambs"? Although my school is making it's best effort to open safely, I don't believe it's fully prepared to open.
On August 1st, Hawaii is set to open to the mainland where a number of states have seen a tremendous spike in COVID-19 cases. Hawaii has had their spike in cases too!
Soon we'll have parents returning to work coming home to their children. Those children in turn will come to school and possibly be carriers(asymptomatic) of the virus.
Knowing this could happen, the board wants us to be 3ft apart and not 6th ft could have consequences to those actions.
There are a lot of supplies that I and my colleagues feel we need to prepare for the school yr and be safe. I haven't heard how that is going to be handled since any money that we had was returned to the state. We were told that if we purchased supplies ourselves that we needed to hold on to our receipts. I don't feel that it is our responsibility to do this when our money is already stretched from pay check to pay check. I'm sure many of us will because we value the safety of our students as much as ourselves!
I'm hoping that you will consider 6ft SD instead of 3ft. By doing this that will ensure you have the best interest of everyone in our schools.

Mahalo,
Tracy

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lori Towata <lori.towata@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lori Towata, third-grade teacher from Lunalilo Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii and I am submitting written testimony regarding the July, 9, 2020 General Business Meeting Discussion VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Based on the rising cases of community spread in the state (on July 7--38 on Oahu alone) not even considering more likely infections from the July 4th weekend, I have legitimate concerns that the guidelines agreed to in the MOU for the reopening of the schools will not provide adequate protections for students and teachers.

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) or separation between and among students and staff members in meeting spaces and exterior school grounds whenever possible."

Based on the limitations of my school work site and the projected number of students in my anticipated 3rd grade class (up to 19), I don't think it is likely that I will be able to safely situate my students in a way that will meet a six-feet distance. Children are affected by the coronavirus and community spread is a reality in our state.

I disagree with the language that does not support a stronger stance on wearing masks. The students in my age range need numerous reminders about healthy and hygienic practices and this was before COVID-19 was prevalent in our community. A stronger mask mandate would help support the physical distancing expectation of CDC's safe practices.

I am part of a household with parents who are in the vulnerable age range. My retired teacher mother should not have to fear that her daughter could possibly get sick from COVID-19 and bring the virus home with her.

Please support students and teachers by developing guidelines with a clear-and-distinct expectation of 6-foot physical distancing and mandatory mask wearing (except for those who have medical exemptions). I want to see my students on a daily basis, but not at the expense of my health or the health of my family.

Thank you,
Lori Towata
Grade 3 Teacher

July 7, 2020

Re: State of Hawaii BOE General Business Meeting dated Thursday, July 9, 2020
Public Testimony opposing reopening plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

I am a first grade teacher who was just informed that the DOE's plan is for all students from Grades K-2 to attend school all day and on a daily basis. Due to health and safety concerns I strongly oppose this proposal.

The "safeguards" that are being proposed with this plan are to space the students 3 feet apart, have them face forward at all times, and strongly recommend that they wear masks at all times. Expecting that 5-7 year-old children will follow these "safeguards" is completely ridiculous and unrealistic. CDC guidelines recommend distancing of 6 feet. Also, not all students will remember to cover their mouths/noses and/or keep their masks on correctly, to prevent droplets from flying when they cough or sneeze. We should not allow ourselves to put students as well as teachers at risk.

In addition, the DOE is not providing us safety measures such as respirators (and the training, medical evaluations and maintenance that goes with use of respirators) that must be provided if the DOE is going to expose us to a work environment that very likely will expose us teachers to airborne Covid- 19. I, and many of my colleagues, are at high-risk and such unreasonable exposure could result in serious harm and even death. Given this ill-conceived plan and the unsafe working conditions that will be provided by the DOE, I will be forced to leave my teaching career of 20+ years.

Distance learning for all students is the safest way to go until we can get a vaccine for Covid-19. Although distance learning may not be the most effective method to learn, it is the SAFEST approach in controlling the spread of this deadly virus in our schools.

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 2020-2021 School Year.

garyige0219@hawaiiantel.net <garyige0219@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Education:

As a lifetime citizen of the state of Hawaii, and proud member of Hawaii's public education system, I submit my concerns regarding the reopening of the school system. I observe that we are squarely in the midst of a pandemic of epic proportion, with our economy and education system in a lock down. The pandemic has yet to be brought under control. All should agree that the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are of foremost concern, and that the schools can only be reopened after thoughtful safety precautions are firmly in place. There should never be a rush to compromise on safety, just to reopen. Safety must always be paramount!

1. Everyone in the classroom must be required to wear a mask at all times, unless excepted because of a medical condition.

2) The Hawaii Department of Education must adhere to a 6 feet distancing in the class room. Let us not forget that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recommended a 6 foot distancing in all instances where 2 or more people are gathered together. To date, I am not aware of any exception to this recommendation that has been endorsed by the CDC. The 6 foot distancing requires that student desks must be kept 6 feet apart. The size of many classrooms may be a problem, but anything less than the 6 foot distancing to address this problem would be unwise and most of all, dangerous.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns. Please keep our students, teachers and staff safe!

Gary S. Ige

Gmail

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

social distancing 3ft/6ft

Wendy Lau <spedidea@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:15 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am teacher and a parent of a high school student. I would like to voice my concern over the issue of social distancing. According to the DOE “Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan,” the HIDOE’s position is that students’ desks can be three feet apart as long as students face the same direction. However, I believe that this policy will put students and staff in danger. Under the US CDC recommendations, it suggested that placing seating/desks at least 6 feet apart to reduce risk. Even though at my school, we will practice social distancing 6 feet apart, that is not true for other schools. Therefore, for the safety of the students, their families and teachers, I implore the DOE to consider physical distancing of six feet whenever possible, even in the classroom.

Testimony

Diane <dgalich@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:15 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

I am writing to testify 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 Diane Ford and I have two children. My daughter is a Third grader who attends Mililani Uka Elementary, and my son is a Kindergartener who is entering Mililani Uka this fall. I am very concerned and uncomfortable about sending both of my children back to school in August for face-to-face learning. The potentially deadly COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread rapidly throughout the country and today, Hawaii recorded the highest number of new cases in one day. As the state continues to reopen and start to welcome visitors from other states and countries without the mandatory quarantine, it is very likely that the cases in our community will continue to surge every day until the start of the school year.

My daughter has asthma and has a higher risk of becoming severely ill if she contracts COVID-19. If she contracts even a cold, she can develop a chronic cough and needs to use an inhaler for several weeks. I can't imagine how her little body would handle a dangerous virus like COVID. My son is only 5 years old and is likely too young to practice sufficient hygiene and social distancing while at school in order to prevent bringing viruses home to my daughter and other family members. Several hundred U.S. children have developed Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome which can result in hospitalization and even death. A majority of these children are between the ages of 6-12, school-aged children.

I have several family members who are considered high-risk for severe illness if they contract COVID-19. My daughter has asthma, my husband has high blood pressure, and my mother-in-law has high blood pressure and is over 65 years old. They are all African-American, which is another vulnerable group shown to suffer higher rates of contracting COVID and becoming severely ill, and higher rates of dying from this disease.

If Mililani Uka decides to send students back to school, my husband and I are seriously considering pulling my kids out of DOE to be homeschooled instead. I don't feel confident that my kids will be safe at school. I appreciate all the efforts that the DOE will try to make in order to keep students safe, but we really don't know enough about this virus to be confident that our children, teachers, faculty and staff will be able to avoid this deadly virus.

I believe that parents should be given an option to do distance-learning full time. This would be my first choice. Then our children can remain in the DOE system until we ride out this pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration.
Diane Ford

Testimony

Chris Mabuni <cmabuni@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:16 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 Christine Mabuni and I am a teacher at Salt Lake Elementary School. I am deeply concerned about the 3' distance required between desks. That's unsafe and puts students, their families, our staff, and our staff's families at risk. In essence, our community.

Some of our students have huge households. Hawaii is expensive so in some families, lots of people live together and they have to work. So they come into contact with other people daily (not necessarily the same people) then come home and interact with their ohana. Then the kids come to school. Consider how many students would be confined in a room together for 5 hours a day sitting only 3' apart if we continue with that model. They're going to be talking, laughing, breathing in the same air, and sharing all their household germs. That is not safe. That Ohana bubble is flawed because it isn't a bubble. There needs to be 6' distancing between desks. We should live what we preach, safety first.

I know we should be opening windows to improve ventilation, and yes, we can do that, but you have to see what our rooms look like now. Once upon a time we had a ton of fresh air because we had louvres. But our school has gone through revonovations and the windows that open are tiny, so I'm not sure how much impact that makes. So now imagine unmasked kids in a poorly ventilated room 3' apart for 5 hours. That's a cause for serious anxiety. Families are entrusting their babies to us. Keeping them safe is our kuleana.

I am not the highest risk group, but my parents are elderly kupuna. I want them to stay home and be safe so I will run errands for them. So even if teachers are not high risk, they may be a key person for people in their family who are. Please keep this in mind.

Sincerely,
Christine Mabuni

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Jacie Miyashiro <jacienmm@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am Jacie Miyashiro, and I am a teacher at ʻAiea 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 am pleading with you to reevaluate your current plan to reopen schools. You are gambling with our lives. Please ask yourselves if even one student, one staff member, or one of their family members dies due to the virus spreading in schools, will reopening in this manner have been worth it?

I have wanted to be a teacher for most of my life. Throughout high school and my first two years of college, I worked hard to make that goal a reality. As a high school student, I witnessed my teachers' anxiety over furlough Fridays. As a college student, I read stories about educators who worked multiple jobs and still couldn't make ends meet. The story of a single mom who wound up living out of her car even though she worked at least 2 other jobs in addition to teaching full time in order to support her son has haunted me since it was published around 2012 or 2013. It was that story that would eventually push me to quit my intended education major for something that I thought would be more practical: economics.

I worked in accounting and auditing for a couple of years, but continued to follow education policy until the 2016 election shook me to my core and convinced me to go back to teaching in an attempt to create a better future for us all. I finally earned my teaching certification last spring, but now I am again faced with the difficult decision of whether to remain a teacher. I love being a teacher, and finally feel passionate about my career. I finally feel settled at my school and feel like I'm at a good place in my life. However, none of that is as important as my health and the health of my loved ones. I have seen time and again that our employers do not care about us teachers, even as we spend 50-60 hours a week at work with no overtime! If this is how I'm going to be treated for the next 30 or so years of my career, just tell me now so I can get out before I've invested too much of my time in a system that doesn't care about whether I live or die.

Or, preferably, spend some time creating a real plan for returning to school. Don't cut corners by allowing people to be on campus without a mask (with the exception of those with documented medical conditions preventing them from wearing a mask). Don't allow school administrators to unilaterally assign bell schedules without input from teachers (as mine have). Don't allow schools to return with bell schedules that do nothing to limit weekly interactions between students and teachers. (What ever happened to the guidance about not having gatherings larger than 10 and keeping your social circle as small as possible? I will be seeing approximately 120 students every week, any one of whom could be infecting myself or their peers while they are asymptomatic. Also, what ever happened to us not returning to school unless we had 4 weeks with no new cases?) Don't passively stand by while the state plans to reopen to tourism and reopen schools in the same month. And definitely **don't allow students to be seated less than 6 feet apart in their classrooms**. Now is the time to be innovative! Use your creativity to come up with solutions to this problem that might fix other problems we have had in the past! Instead of arrogantly trying to return to "normal," let's work together to create a better path forward and use this as an opportunity to address some of the problems in education that have been plaguing us for years.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jacie Miyashiro

Gmail

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

Social distancing

Toni Ramirez <ramirezcrew2527@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:15 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to you to express my concern about leaving only 3 ft. apart between students.
If the CDC is recommending a minimum of 6th and people are still getting infected, what makes you think 3 ft. will do any good?

Cases in the island are increasing rapidly and we must take all precautions so that our keiki don't end up infecting his/her community.

Toni Ramírez
CBA Texas

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kimberly Wilson <wilsonk@knights.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kimberly Wilson I am a teacher at James B. Castle High School I am writing in regards to our returning to school on July 29, 2020 during the Covid-19 Pandemic. I am currently taking PD classes to help me develop my online-learning to help support my students. I am more than willing to take classes on my personal time to help me students, in order to create a stronger pedagogy that will enhance my students learning, but I do think that safety measures should be put into place to protect us. I have serious concerns when it comes to returning to the classroom since I am 50 years old,and have had heart issues in the past. I also live with my parents who are in their seventies, and with my grandson who is four years old, I am hoping that the school board is taking all the precautions possible when it comes to our safety. One issue that concerns me is the fact that we are going to have students only 3 feet apart when it is recommend that socially distancing is 6 feet, I am not sure who came up with the 3 foot distancing or what the reasoning is, but it sounds like it is creating a very unsafe working condition for returning teachers and students alike. The second issue that concerns me is that I understand that students will not be wearing masks in class? It seems like having a group of people in a room together is the exact time that we should all have to be wearing masks, for the safety of both teachers and students. These issues weigh heavily upon me I love being a teacher and I love my family I also want the best for my students, I want to be able to teach them in the classroom again, but not if it will be hurting me or my family. Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Kimberly C. Wilson

Gmail

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

Fall Reopening Testimony

Iris Harris <senseiharris808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom it May Concern,

I am an educator at Makaha Elementary School. Additionally, I have been watching the news frequently and have been keeping up with the current updates regarding COVID-19. And with all that is happening, I also have concerns regarding opening the schools this fall.

Education is important for our keiki, this I will never doubt, but above their education, I value their safety. I begin EVERY school year basically telling my students their safety is always my first priority, not their grades. For, if they are not safe, then their grades don't really matter. The question I am now facing is: are we considering the safety of our students this fall?

HIDOE wants to reopen with a 3 feet distance for students in the classroom. I still believe (especially if the plan is to relax mask restrictions) we need to enforce the 6 feet apart in the classroom (similar to the restaurants). I believe HIDOE chose 3 feet to fit more students in the classroom. However, I will return to my original stance: are we keeping our students safe with 3 feet of distance?

Base on my understanding of COVID, it's a highly contagious disease. Our students could come to school with it and not even be aware, thus passing it to another student who returns home and passes it to someone with a weak immune system. To help prevent that scenario as much as possible, keeping the 6 feet distance in a well ventilated classroom would be the ideal conditions for our students. It's not the BEST solution, but if we are returning to face to face instruction (which I know our students NEED), I would feel safer for myself, my students, their families, my colleagues, my colleagues' families if we keep the 6 feet requirement.

Please consider pushing for this requirement in our schools this fall, but also prepare to enforce at home instruction if COVID cases continue to rise.

Sincerely,
Iris Harris
Makaha Elementary School

Gmail

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

Personal Testimony Statement

Abigail Palmer <abigail.palmer@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This email is my testimony regarding the discussion item "Presenting on the Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan to Reopening Schools."

I am writing to implore you to change your mind regarding Superintendent Kishimoto's reckless statement that students will not be required to wear masks for the return to classrooms and will have 3ft social distancing instead of 6ft. Per the CDC, masks slow the spread of the virus and keep teachers and students safe. The CDC also states that people should be social distancing at a minimal distance of 6ft. Allowing students to return without wearing masks and with 3ft social distancing is dangerous and unsafe for students and staff. On Friday, July 3, Mayor Kirk Caldwell signed the mandate which was approved by Governor David Ige. It requires citizens to wear protective masks or shields when leaving the house. *"The amended Order 5: Non-Medical Grade Face Coverings now requires everyone on O'ahu to wear non-medical grade face coverings over their noses and mouths at indoor public spaces, like Essential Business and Designated Businesses and Operations, as well as outdoor areas where physical distancing is unlikely or difficult to maintain."* Wearing a non-surgical grade protective face covering is now required indoors and in outdoor areas where you are not able to social distance. Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said that even if it's uncomfortable, you are still required to wear face coverings. The same mandate should be followed in our school system.

I am classified as high risk for contracting the virus. In my family, my father has an auto immune disease and is diabetic. He is currently working with the Mayo Clinic to receive treatment. I also have asthma and other heath concerns. The Mayo Clinic does not recommend returning to schools without the proper safety precautions. Returning to school with the current measures in place from Superintendent Kishimoto would put myself and my family at extremely high risk for COVID-19. The Board of Education should value the well-being of teachers and our safety as well as the safety of our students. I do not feel that students and teachers are safe to return to schools if they are not required to wear masks and only stay 3ft apart. In order to protect ourselves from contracting the virus, all students and staff should be required to wear face coverings and social distance at least 6ft apart at all times. I am at risk for contracting the virus and I do not feel comfortable returning to school until the Board of Education can take the necessary measures to keep students and staff safe. For the safety and wellbeing of students and teachers, please show us that you care about us by requiring students to wear masks and social distance at least 6ft apart when returning to schools.

Sincerely,

Abigail Palmer

Special Education Teacher

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

Yahna Kawaa <yahna@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:21 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 2020-2021 school year

I am an early childhood special education teacher at Maunawili Elementary, in Windward O'ahu, where I have been teaching for the past 11 years. I love my work and this age-group. Three and four-year-olds are the littlest learners with the most potential. Their exuberance and zest for learning and life have given me the passion to remain in the profession, despite the pressures and challenges of special education. However, this year, a new challenge awaits me.

Teaching during a pandemic.

Everything in the classroom will be different this year. The need to be socially distanced will alter the way children and staff enter the classroom and how parents drop-off and pick-up their children. It will require new seating arrangements for breakfast and lunch and impact how children use the restroom, sit for story-time, and play with puzzles at a free-choice time. It will change how our students brush their teeth, use art materials, and lay on their mats for naptime. Maintaining a six-foot distance between students will change the way we teach and learn, but it is necessary and important.

Currently, we have 11 children enrolled in the program, 6 returning and 5 new. Our max is 16. I have visually mapped in my mind where and how spaces will be set up, and the number of children allowed in each designated "center" at a time (i.e., library, science, home, blocks, art, writing, outdoor area).

Social distancing for young children will require lots of visual cues.

To ensure that children can engage safely in developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day, such as story-time, free-choice playtime, mealtime, and nap time, we will mark our carpets using brightly colored tape in different shapes. Children will sit and play inside a heart, star, or circle, at a six (6) foot distance between their friends. If it helps adults in the check-out line at Longs CVS, then we'll try this with our 3 and 4-year-olds, too.

Walmart, Safeway, and Wholefoods use arrows in every aisle to direct the flow of traffic and six (6) foot markers on the floor at check-out lines. The Hawaii State Teacher's Union and the State of Hawaii agreed to a six-foot distance or two arm's length (whichever is longer) of separation among students and staff members in meeting spaces, hallways, and exterior school grounds whenever possible in the Memorandum of Understanding on June 26th, 2020. It is ludicrous to allow less than that between students in a classroom setting. It is our obligation to protect our public school students, teachers, staff, and families. A six (6) foot distance between students and staff is not only the safe thing to do, it is the right thing to do.

Three (3) feet between students and staff is unacceptable!

In cases where social distancing is impossible (i.e., assisting students in diapers), our staff, including myself, will be wearing masks, gloves, and face shields, to protect ourselves from coming into contact with bodily fluids. We know that the virus is found in feces. In the early childhood classroom, tear-filled goodbyes are very common during the first few weeks of school and a teacher won't be able to maintain a minimum of six (6) feet distance necessary to comfort an upset child as his or her parent leaves for work.

I feel very strongly about masks, for teachers and students and am concerned that masks and face shields are only "highly recommended" in one of the proposed school models. Young children who are upset may cry (and scream) propelling droplets into the air. As a special education teacher, I am in contact with many different people, including speech, occupational and physical therapists, school nurses, educational assistants, many of whom I see on a daily basis. By wearing a mask myself, I am ensuring their safety. Masks, gloves, paper towels, soap, and bleach need to be fully stocked and available, especially in early childhood classroom settings where the staff is required to aid children with using the restroom and dressing. Furthermore, extra masks must be available for days when a student or staff member will likely forget to bring one to school.

Mask-covered faces, from nose to chin will impact the verbal and visual communication we rely on for socialization and teaching. But it is the reality. Voices will be muffled, smiles hidden, and frowns undetected. This is a small price to pay for safety. To aid and support our youngest learners, our classroom puppets "Bob" and "Alice" along with a few stuffed animal friends will show the children the importance of wearing a mask. Even, Dr. Sanjay Gupta told Elmo that he should wear a mask; and Elmo is only 3 and a half years old!

I also feel strongly about temperature checks, another important way to protect our students and staff. After purchasing a thermometer online, I learned that we are not allowed to conduct temperature checks and instead need to rely on visual cues or asking children how they feel. This is a challenge for young children, especially those with cognitive or language delays. A quick temperature check upon arrival, with the help of our stuffed animal friends, can be done safely, and respectfully to protect everyone.

I am in my 40’s and am considered in the at-risk age group. My parents, especially my mother, who is immunocompromised, are at a higher risk of getting sick if I bring the virus home. We know that children are also at risk of contracting the virus and can spread it to their families.

Distance learning is a very safe option. It is a real possibility in the near future. Schools, administrators, teachers, parents, and students should be prepared for this transition and given adequate training, and access to technology to properly support learning at a distance, even for our littlest learners. Mr. Roger's did it, and with great success.

I agree with our HSTA president, Corey Rosenlee’s statement that teachers are not "sacrificial lambs". Hawaii's public schools are not testing sites to determine the safest minimum amount of space between students and staff.

Implementing a 3-foot distancing requirement is NOT SAFE!

While schools are set to reopen in less than a month, it is crucial that the Board of Education support learning while protecting the health of students, teachers, and staff. Parents need to work, teachers need to educate, and students need to learn. But the classroom environment must be safe for everyone. We shouldn’t sacrifice health for convenience. I urge you to require a six (6) foot distance between students and teachers and masks in every public school classroom in Hawaii.

Mahalo.

Yahna Kawa’a

Yahna Kawa'a, M.A., M.Ed.
Special education teacher
Maunawili Elementary
266-7831
yahna.kawaa@k12.hi.us

Support Ms. Kawaa's classroom at ClassroomGiving or DonorsChoose

"Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.” - Fred Rogers

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jolyn Lee <joyamash@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE Members,

I have three family members on the mainland who are sick with Covid-19. Two were just recently diagnosed & are in the beginning stages of the illness. We are all praying that they will not suffer any serious complications. However, both of them are over 50 years old and are in the elevated risk category. The third is in rehab after successfully fighting the illness & spending time on a ventilator. She cannot walk, she still has difficulty breathing due to residual permanent lung damage & it will be a while before she is able to go home.

Don't let my mainland Ohana's stories become our stories here in Hawaii. Protect our Keiki, our teachers, our Ohana. Now is not the time to return to school campuses. Now is not the time to ignore CDC guidelines. We should not be considered opening schools. We should be figuring out alternative solutions which should include delaying the start of the school year.

Mahalo,
Jolyn Lee
AVID Teacher
Washington Middle School
27 years teaching in Hawaii DOE schools

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Testimony on Discussion Item VI (A)

Kalera R <milanista1319@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello Hawai'i Board of Education members,

My name is Kalera Richards and I work at an elementary school on Oahu. I am writing in regard to **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 asking that the DOE's requirements for appropriate social distancing when arranging students' desks be 6 feet and that the face coverings be required inside and outside of the classroom. Six feet is the number the DOE and HSTA had agreed upon and to unilaterally renege on that agreement would be careless. Six feet is the number that the Center for Disease Control (CDC), along with many shops and grocery stores in Hawaii recommend. Six feet is also recommended by Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The majority of businesses in Hawaii require that customers and employees wear face coverings so why should our schools be any different? In fact, on July 2, Mayor Caldwell stated that, effective July 3 face masks are required on Oahu. He stated “Whether you’re in a private office building, a public building, whether you’re in an enclosed mall, you must wear a face covering.” Why shouldn't that apply to our schools? In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Dr. Fauci and the CDC recommend that individuals wear face coverings *and* maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and others not living in their household. By disregarding the CDC and Dr. Fauci's recommendations and guidelines, it seems like the BOE is saying that they are more knowledgeable about infectious diseases than the CDC and Dr. Fauci, our nation's top infectious disease expert. To say that 3 feet is sufficient if all students are facing forward is irresponsible and puts students and teachers at risk. As an educator, I know that students will not stay seated in the same direction for an entire instruction block, let alone the whole day. They might turn around or lean to the side to: talk to another student, stretch their body, or ask a student for help on an assignment. Allowing face coverings to be optional in the classroom in addition to only requiring 3 feet of space between students' desks creates a very dangerous environment for students and employees, but a very hospitable one for the spread of COVID-19.

It is especially important to adhere to the CDC's guidelines to ensure the safety of not only students and school employees, but their families and communities. There are a lot of school employees who are in the high-risk category when it comes to becoming severely ill or dying from COVID-19. Also, many students and school employees have family members who are high-risk and many of their family members may work alongside or interact with high risk individuals. We all know how quickly COVID-19 can spread throughout workplaces and communities. Please do right by our students, employees, families, and communities. Please require that students' desks be placed 6 feet apart and that students and employees wear face coverings inside *and* outside of the classroom.

Thank you for your time,
Kalera Richards

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kimi Mark <kapua98@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:24 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 Kimi Mark and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Nanaikapono 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.

I do not feel comfortable with only having a 3 feet distance between students. As President Rosenlee stated I am not a sacrificial lamb! I have a family and don't want to endanger them by contracting COVID - 19. I am the only one that is able to work because my husband is disabled. I love being a teacher for over 10 years and I hope my voice is heard about this issue. Please make the DOE adhere to the 6 feet guidelines for social distancing in the classroom with our students.

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Albert Queja <albert.queja@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
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. As an uncle I'm worried for my niece who would be attending school this year because of the new outbreaks that are occurring daily now. And I feel that it is necessary to keep the use of masks and 6ft distancing in the classroom. It has been successful so far when it's being done properly. This is me speaking as a worker who works in retail where we also applied the same directives of masks and 6ft distancing and so far even with the influx of people coming into the store and with my coworkers it has proven to be an effective method and that we should continue doing so in order to prevent covid from spread through out classrooms.

From
Albert Queja-Zabohonski

Gmail

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

Masks and 3ft in schools

Sulun Novikoff <sulun.novikoff@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:26 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing on behalf of the ruling regarding masks and the 3 ft distance rule at our public schools. I am a teacher and love being in the classroom with my students, but I also will not put myself and my family who are high risk from covid, in danger. That is exactly what we will all be in if we do not wear masks and keep our 6ft distance. Today there were over 40 cases in the state of hawaii and it was advised to be in groups no larger then 10 people and wear masks. Please rethink this ruling and make madatory masks in school and 6ft spacing for all...
Mahalo!
Su Lun Novikoff

Sent from my iPhone

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Testimony

Cheryl "Miko" Sanico <mikosanico@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the 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.”

My name is Cheryl Sanico. I am the Librarian at Wheeler Elementary School. I am also the parent of two children who attend Wheeler Middle School.

In this testimony I am resharing a letter sent from an educator on Maui, used with her permission, because she expresses the issue most eloquently.

“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.”

So, I ask you, Board Members, are you willing to be confined with unmasked students in classrooms for 5-6 hours a day, for 5 days a week when you can’t even hold your meetings face to face?

What are you going to do to fill the classrooms when your plans have infected the teachers you put at risk? Who will then teach the keiki?

This distance plan of less than 6 feet is not safe. We want to teach our keiki, but we need to be just as safe as you are when doing your jobs.

Mahalo nui loa-
Cheryl Sanico
Wheeler Elementary School

Testimony

Tara Gumapac <tgumapac@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:28 PM

To the Board Of Education and Department 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.

My name is Tara Gumapac. I work at Kalāheo High School and my child goes to He`eia Elementary School. I am not OK with the 3 Feet Rule. Why did you go back on what was agreed upon? This is disheartening and irresponsible behavior by my leadership. I have been working within the education system for over 15 years and in various capacities, from charter schools to major high schools and as a teacher, community member and parent who was born and raised in Hawai'i with generations of teachers within my family and YOU have made a terrible decision. You are putting your teachers at risk. You are putting your students at risk. You are putting your cafeteria workers, custodians, principals, office clerks...everyone that works in direct contact with the public at risk by 1. thinking we can go back in session during a PANDEMIC and 2. closing the social space of safety to 3 feet.

I have two small children who were born severely premature at 22 and 23 weeks, but are now thriving as a 6 and 1 year old and it would be the death of me to know that I brought home COVID-19 because I caught it at school and gave it to my children. The children I fought for a total of a year in the NICU. My children that I used all my family leave and shared leave because I had to care for them at home because YOUR POLICY says I need to use all of my FMLA to care for my child and then apply for shared leave. I have no FMLA left to care for my high risk family at home. My son is still on oxygen. My daughter has respiratory issues. To top it off, I also have elderly parents who live with me who are at high risk because they are medically fragile.

Please tell me how you are making informed decisions as leaders to protect the public and the communities you serve. Changing things behind our backs is not servicing anyone at all, but putting everyone at risk.

My daughter goes to He‘eia Elementary School. She is a high risk case because she was born severely premature and has respiratory issues when she gets sick. Did you know a child‘s lungs grow until they are about 6 years old? We have taken every precaution to keep both of our children safe and healthy even when my son was born severely premature, we made sure to have her keep her distance as we know children spread colds. If you put her in too close proximity with other people, her chances of getting sick and dying are much greater than other children with healthier lungs. She had a 12% chance of survival when she was born and her brother had a 5% chance of survival when he was born. I am not risking my children‘s lives on the assumption that you say "3 feet is ok" even when it goes against CDC guidelines and our agreement.

Since this all happened we have been vigilant and we don‘t go out. We wear masks if we have to. We keep our distance from others. If my job is telling me to risk my life because they needed to fit more children into a classroom then you are asking me to quit as a teacher.

If we have to return to work, please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks because if we are being told to return to work the

best we can do is keep everyone spaced apart to prevent the spread.

Mahalo

Tara Gumapac

Mother
Fine Arts Department Head
Kalāheo High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

David Colmenares <drcblue@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a parent and a teacher I am very concerned with the proposed 3 ft distance between students instead of the much safer 6feet. I feel that the 3 feet is too close and we should not sacrifice the children's safety for the sake of fitting as many kids in the classroom. I understand it is difficult for schools to be able to fit kids in the classroom with the suggested 6 feet distance but schools are supposed to reflect society and if what is safe for society is 6 feet, then 6 feet it should be. Students are taught to social distance and we cannot make exceptions.

David Colmenares
Highlands Intermediate School

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Karen Henry <karenhenry108@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

7.7.2020

Re: Discussion ItemVI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year

To Whom it concerns;

I am strongly opposed to opening the schools for in-school attendance in fall 2020, which is fast approaching.

Recommended 6 ft social distancing and wearing masks is not practical for in-school settings.
Around our country and parts of the world Covid-19 cases are increasing dramatically along with hospitalizations and deaths.
Hawaii is planning to open to air travel, making our island population more vulnerable to exposure and the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Our administrators, teachers, students, support personnel, family members including vulnerable kapunas, and our community members should be protected from exposure and spread of this life threatening virus. Opening the schools at this time is not responsible and could be deadly.

I strongly urge that the schools DO NOT open for in-school attendance at this tenuous time.

Sincerely,
Karen R. Henry
Kona, Hawaii

Gmail

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

testimony

Carrie Markham <carreoki@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:31 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello! 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 name is Carrie Markham and I'm a PE teacher at Kapalama Elementary. I have a child at Pearl City High School and a grandchild at Waiau Elementary School.

Please mandate the CDC recommended 6 feet apart student spacing in classrooms to reduce the risk of the Covid-19 transmission. I really don't want this year to have student and teacher virus infections and the possibility of losing a coworker or a student. My school has not talked about having barriers between students or having our own classroom thermometers. All we discussed is that we are losing the Project (Music, Computer Science, Library, P.E.) classes because those teachers, including me, will be teaching in a Gen. Ed. classroom. We know that having more classes per grade level will reduce the amount of students in a room but having only 3 feet apart is a huge risk of catching the virus. 3 feet is such a small distance! We do a lot of class work with groups (partner, small and large group). Students can't even walk to a teacher without touching or visiting a friend on the way. If it's hot, I can picture the students touching their masks or even taking it off and that is a huge risk of the virus being transferred. Elementary students may not understand the chance of being exposed when all they can think of is hanging out with their friends or have the urge to be near their caring, loving teachers who give them the attention they need. Learning will be a 3rd priority behind safety and mourning the loss of our precious members of my Kapalama ohana.

Thank you,
Carrie Markham
Kapalama Elementary School PE Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Debra Ginoza <dginoza2@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on discussion item VI: Presentation on Department if Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My name is Debra Ginoza and I am a teacher at Leihōkū Elementary School in Waianae.

I am seriously concerned with the HIDOE's health and safety guidance. Students sitting three feet apart, without masks, is unacceptable. That puts them, their families and their teachers at risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. The CDC considers small in person classes where students remain at least six feet apart "more risk." Student that are not spaced apart are considered "highest risk."

Please do the right thing for all involved by approving a six foot distancing guide rather than the three foot guiderecommended by the HIDOE.

Thank you for your consideration in this manner.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Kelly Kaholokula <kelly.kaholokula@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:36 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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.

My name is Kelly Kaholokula and I am a proud teacher at Moanalua High School. My daughter will be starting Kindergarten in the Central District as well.

We feel it is unsafe for teachers and students to be only 3 feet apart! We should at least be 6 ft apart and abide by The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. If we are changing our school scheduling why can't we also change that rule. It only makes sense. There are over 150,000 students and more than 11,000 teachers...if we do not distance ourselves we have a greater/faster chance of clusters of COVID-19 at many different schools. Not only can that happen but if any student or teacher brings it home our family's will also be at risk. It is already a risk to see all of our many students in our classes every day. Especially, with no given personal protective equipment.

Please take this testimony to heart. People's health and safety are the most important...learning is hard when you're sick, no? Thank you.

Aloha,
Kelly Kaholokula
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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Nanea Fukuda <ndc3@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am emailing 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 Nanea Fukuda and I just completed my first year teaching in Hilo at Chiefess Kapiolani Schools. I enjoyed coming to school every day and when this pandemic hit I missed my students just as much as I missed my own family. I am glad to see we will be back in the Fall.

These are not normal times we are experiencing, we cannot disregard the guidelines given to us by the CDC! I was always looking forward to coming back to work but if the BOE decides my health is not important I don't know if I can continue this teaching career. Which is something that I've been looking forward to for quite some time.

Please reconsider your decisions and keep your teachers in mind.

Mahalo,
Nanea Fukuda

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

atyndzik . <ambertyndzik@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Chair Payne and other BOE members,

I am testifying in regards to Discussion item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

This school year will be my tenth year in the DOE as an elementary school teacher at King WIlliam C. Lunalilo. Teaching is my passion. I love what I do so much and I have been willing to make so many financial and personal sacrifices in order to continue teaching throughout the years. My students are my everything. The thing is though, right now the thing I love to do the most is now the source of anxiety and fear. I am young, but I have a heart condition. Still, I want to be in the classroom so much. I Know that no situation can be completely safe right now, but I implore you to please make it as safe as humanly possible for the keiki, teachers and staff. That is all I am asking. Please do everything in your power to tell the DOE that we need to, at the very least, follow the CDC guidelines of keeping our keiki 6 ft apart when inside of the classroom and encourage all to wear a mask when possible. I know that we will have to be creative in making this happen, but we are educators and innovators. We can do this and do it in a way where we will all feel as safe as possible, given the current situation.

Mahalo for you time and attention to this matter,
Amber Tyndzik

Gmail

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

Testimony

janiegarcia86 <janiegarcia86@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Janie Garcia- grandmother of 4 @
Ho'okele Elem. Kapolei Hi.
Not in favor of 3ft. distancing.
Very dangerous setting for our keiki. Please keep them safe.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Gmail

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

testimony

Janel Yoshimura <janel_yoshimura@momilanies.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:43 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 Janel Yoshimura and I am a school teacher at Momilani Elementary school, Pearl City complex, Leeward District.

I am not comfortable with spacing student seats three feet apart without masks. **This directly contradicts our agreement with the state** and 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.” 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. This very thought scares me.

Why is it that the UH college system will be spacing their students 6 feet apart and the elementary and secondary public school system can space their students 3 feet apart? Six feet distance is required at Costco and restaurants. Why would it be different for elementary and secondary public school students and teachers? The same rules that apply to our UH college system and public, should also be followed in our elementary and secondary public schools.

For the health and safety of ALL people, please keep to the 6 feet social distancing in our public schools. Please keep our students, teachers, and our families safe.

Mahalo!

Gmail

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

Mask requirements and 6’ distancing to reopen our schools

ALICIA MIYASHIRO <boolahboy@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:44 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members! I am a teacher in the island of Kauai. I encourage you all to assure the safety of our students as well as teachers and school staff members. Please assure that we have mandatory mask wearing and 6’ distancing to protect the health of our students. These are our precious children we need to protect them from this horrible COVID 19 virus especially recently with new cases on our island. Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Concerned Parent

Jacquelyn Cadiz <jacquelync123@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

With the current situation of increasing numbers of infections from COVID-19, I am not comfortable with my child returning to school with only a 3 foot distance from the next student.
We would all like to think we are taking the proper precautions and not coming in contact with those who may be infected, but as things begin to open up and the ignorance of some families who think attending functions and what have you are okay to do because “They don’t have it, it’s okay to hang out with them,” attitudes are putting my child and my family in danger.
I do have people in my household with underlying health issues and don’t feel we should Be put into a position to play Russian Roulette with our lives.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nohea Stibbard <noheas@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha e ka 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 Nohea Stibbard and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Hauʻula Elementary and my children attend Kahuku High & Intermediate School and Kamehameha.

As a parent and teacher, I demand the BOE to require the Department of Education to implement the highest levels of recommendations by the CDC during this alarming pandemic. During this time of continued uncertainty, it is imperative to implement the minimum 6 feet distancing and facial mask requirement! Just in the last couple of days there has been an upward trend of new cases in the state and some of these cases are not connected to clusters.

This is not the time to ease up on virus best practices due to logistics. The health and safety of students, staff and families should be the DOE's utmost priority. Students, teachers and staff will be returning to already poor ventilated classrooms which can create an environment that contains a buildup of the virus therefore increasing the probability of contracting it. Not requiring facial masks or 6 feet distancing at minimum is endangering the health and safety of all.

Again, please mandate the DOE to configure classrooms with 6 feet between desks, require facial masks, and be creative with educational offerings to parents.

Sincerely,
Nohea Stibbard

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY - Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Kumu Uluhani Waialeale <kumuuluhani@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Members of the Board of Education,

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Uluhani Waialeale & I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion Elementary Teacher at Kualapuʻu Public Conversion Charter School on Molokai. I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As an Educator, I am extremely concerned, worried & frustrated with the unsafe conditions & guidelines previously agreed upon in the MOU between HSTA & the HIDOE. There has been a significant increase in new COVID-19 cases in Hawaiʻi & I feel strongly that reopening schools during this time is a HUGE mistake. You are putting hundreds & thousands of lives in danger by putting them in unsafe conditions. It is developmentally inappropriate to expect children to keep a safe social distance through out the day even we expected them to be 10 feet apart. A community spread of COVID-19 in a school will be the most heartbreaking & devastating issue we will face. I am the primary caretaker of both of my parents & I am extremely concerned for the health & safety of their well-being. We have decided as a family to stay at home & follow ALL State orders since the pandemic started & we continue to do so. By reopening unsafe schools, you are putting my life, the lives of my household & the lives of all my students at risk to be exposed to this nasty virus. The day we lose precious lives from reopening unsafe schools will be a very, very SAD day. If students fall behind from Remote Learning, we can always recover & get them back up to speed. If we lose a life, we can NEVER recover from that. I urge you to please rethink your decision to reopen schools until it is safe to do so for everyone. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration. God bless us all 🙏🏾🙏🏾🙏🏾

Naʻu iho me ke kākoʻo mau,
Uluhani Waialeale

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Kathleen Hoppe <msjhops@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha kākou,

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 a public charter school on the Waiʻanae coast. I love my job counseling and supporting student needs, collaborating with my colleagues, and serving my community. My team, my school, and my community always consider the effects decisions have on the wellbeing of the keikiI they serve. I think it is highly dangerous, risky, and disrespectful to our students, their ʻohana, our state educators, faculty and staff, and their ʻohana to reopen schools insisting on only three (3) feet distancing. We are in the midst of a pandemic, and I have not heard a single educator or parent profess to be ok with anything less than the safest measures for children. When we look at the long term effects of survivors of COVID-19, we are looking at debilitating damage to major organs, neurological deficiencies, and great loss of quality of life. So, please do not just look at death/survival rates.

Reducing risk can be done better with six (6) feet distancing more than three feet, and I canʻt understand why the Department of Education would put children, staff, faculty, and our communities at risk in such a manner. We are already in a crisis in education due to the lack of qualified teachers, and you not ensuring the maximum advised safety by the CDC in schools is like a slap to the face of all of us. Many of us educators also have children in schools, but with this three feet distancing, even we are beginning to have a lack of trust in those who are making decisions.

I strongly encourage you to make good decisions about the return to school - masks mandatory for all unless experiencing medical conditions or disabilities that would make that dangerous (with face shield as a substitute), and make six feet distancing of students in classrooms mandatory.

Mahalo,
Kathleen Hoppe

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Brandon Cha <brandoncha3@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To The Board of Education,

I am writing this testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year in STRONG disagreement with the Hawaii Department of Education's decision to re-open schools with students sitting only 3 feet apart. The BOE must MANDATE that all classroom desks be no less than 6 feet apart, AND that masks MUST be worn, with exceptions for health reasons. I am a public school employee who lives with another public school employee who is at-risk for COVID due to age and pre-existing health conditions.

I must ask; why is 6-feet spacing mandated in restaurants and other public interaction, but not in public schools?

Why is 6-feet also being mandated at UH campuses this Fall, but not in public schools?

Furthermore, why is your very BOE meeting - with approximately the same amount of people as a 30-student sized classroom - being held virtually, without public schools acting similarly?

These guidelines were adopted with safety being of paramount concern - not for convenience of implementation. This was done because we collectively realize that anything less will result in death and economic harm. Cutting corners in the name of logistic feasibility will only force us to re-shutdown, similar to Arizona or Florida, which will further hurt Hawaii's economy.

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency's official Twitter account recently posted that effective face masks must cover the mouth and nose, and that people should stay 6-feet away from non-household members. We know that schools are one of the largest contributors to COVID transmission. And we know that scientific evidence increasingly shows that COVID particles can be airborne.

As of this past Tuesday, Hawaii had its largest single day caseload - 41 cases - since the start of the pandemic. Imagine, what will happen to those caseloads once 184,000+ students and 13,500+ teachers and other public school employees end their pseudo-quarantine and return to school? We are the 12th largest school district in the country, with consequences that will extend statewide if we fail to reopen schools safely.

The DOE's current 3-feet mandate and mask requirements are already making high-risk or elderly teachers and substitute teachers (many of whom are retired teachers) consider leaving their positions, which will only increase the class sizes of the remaining teachers in schools. Teachers and the public are looking to the Board's Members to act with, as you put it, "hope, kindness, and togetherness." The current requirements do not make teachers feel safe, and do not meet your stated goals.

I understand that schools need to reopen so Hawaii's working parents can return to work and revitalize the economy; some would call this babysitting, but either way, schools undeniably serve an important purpose. Not following the HI-EMA's guidelines will inevitably lead to COVID being spread into the families of students and teachers, and then into the general public. You, our esteemed Board Members, or other public officials not directly in the classroom, will still be at grave risk once cases spread from school situations into the general public, despite the Dept. of Health's best intentions to test and contact trace.

If we must reopen Hawaii's schools on schedule, then please issue the necessary mandates to ensure that it happens the correct way. These are unprecedented times, but that is all the more reason that we must go through with this correctly. It is not an exaggeration to say the consequences will be life-and-death.

Thank you for your time.

- Brandon Cha

Gmail

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

Re: Back to School

Erin Britos <erinbritos@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:52 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

McKinley High School created a plan that all faculty agreed upon. This plan includes hybrid classes and social distancing of 6 feet.
IF/WHEN the daily covid rates begin a downward trend then this plan can be implemented.
However, Schools must also be points of testing for faculty and the school community in order to remain safe.
There is no other safe option save exclusive on-line instruction.
Guidelines must be followed, we are not a business that serves customers.
Mahalo,
Erin B.
McKinley High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Leslie Escobedo <leslieescobedo@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:52 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Kealakehe High School on the Big 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.

I would like to voice my objection to the 3 ft distancing component of the districts plan. It is imperative that the district follow the CDC recommendation of 6 ft distancing. Especially given the fact that the agreement states that students will not have to wear masks at all times, the social distancing must be six feet in order to protect students and staff. I have underlying health issues that put me at increased risk from COVID-19, and I am concerned that the DOE is not taking appropriate steps to protect us. Please address this issue. I appreciate your help.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Leslie Glikas
Teacher
Kealakehe High School

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Pamela Miyagawa <pmiyagawa23@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:53 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

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 Pamela Miyagawa. I am writing to you as a concerned community member and parent. I am very concerned about the safety and well being of all of the students, staff and community members. I strongly feel that the 3 feet distancing and "suggested" use of masks are completely unacceptable and extremely unsafe.

The practices mentioned above are not safe, nor is it in accordance with what is being recommended by the CDC. Currently, most schools will not be able to afford plexiglass, plastic sheet partitions, or face shields for staff members. They will also ONLY be providing one cleaning per day, at the end of the school day. This will definitely expose many children, and in turn, all of their families, to a possibility of contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Our schools and communities consist mostly of multigenerational or multi family living situations. This factor puts even more community members at risk and could quickly lead to community spread of the virus.

I beg that you please take this into consideration and work diligently to put safer practices into place for the sake of our community.

Thank you for your time,
Pamela Miyagawa

Gmail

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

RE: Testimony

Jennifer Sugahara <jennifer.sugahara@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

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 am a mother of two children in SOH DOE schools: Mililani Mauka Elementary School and Mililani Middle School. I am also an educator at Radford High School.

I am writing to tell you that the DOE plan to minimize social distancing to 3 feet will be an invitation to a Covid-19 outbreak at one or more of our schools. I proctor the ACT and PSAT at our school, which requires the students to be placed 3' apart on all sides. Let me tell you, that is only ONE desk chair between students. It is close enough for students to hold hands, pass a pencil/pen or chat quietly. The space required between customers at Times or Costco is 6'. WHY would the SOH DOE allow physical distance for 6 hours a day to be LESS than what is required to purchase a gallon of milk at the grocery store? Also, the caveat for the 3' distance is that all students remain facing forward. Do you think there isn't one student who will "forget" or "disregard" the instruction? The minimization of physical distancing makes the spread much more feasible.

I am also disappointed to learn that the DOE will not mandate some form of face covering for students and teachers. The CDC recommends: "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." Health experts agree that mask wearing helps to prevent the spread of Covid-19. WHY wouldn't the SOH DOE follow this guideline? Did you know that the typical teacher at my school teaches between 120-145 students per week. Without masks, that equals 120-145 opportunities for a teacher to get infected. I worry about many of my colleagues who fall into the vulnerable category - especially one who is pregnant. Students at our school have 7 classes per week x 24 students/class (average). Including the teachers they see that week, that's somewhere around 175 opportunities for the students to get infected. For my children, I worry about their exposure, their teachers and I especially worry about them bringing an infection home to my elderly parents who are my children's after school caregivers.

While I wish all my students could be in class with me everyday, without masks as they did pre-Covid, I don't think it's worth the health risk to any of my students, my colleagues, my family or myself. So let's approach the start of school with an

abundance of caution - min. 6' physical distance between students and requiring face masks. I don't think this is asking a lot to ensure the health and safety of everyone who will be in the classroom.

Thank you,

Jennifer Sugahara
Parent - Mililani Mauke Elem., Mililani Middle
Teacher - Radford High School

--

Jennifer Sugahara
Explorations in Medical Services
HOSA Advisor
Admiral Arthur W. Radford High School
4361 Salt Lake Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96818

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

testimony

Dave and minds <dminouye@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My testimony is presented on behalf of Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for reopening.

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, everyone looks to the CDC for guidance on protocol for the opening of schools and businesses. Why is it then, that Dr. Kishimoto's verbal agreement on the HSTA re-opening of Schools MOU is not being honored? Why would she renege on the agreement and why would she do so publicly on the news? This switch is totally disingenuous and stabs us teachers in the back, in addition it makes us the bad-guys in the eyes of the public!!! The CDC has stated that 6-feet social distancing is one of the keys to preventing the spread of COVID, so please abide by that agreement.

The 3-feet apart rule that you are now suggesting is in violation of the agreement and it implies to us (teachers) that we are expendable and immune to COVID! If we "cave in" to your three-foot distance, our numbers will spike, schools will have to shut down and heaven forbid, a teacher(s) may lose his/her life! There are many high risk individuals in the DOE and forcing them to choose a paycheck over their health will not help our students, their families or the teacher's families.

As a teacher with more than 30 years in the profession, please respect your agreement on the MOU and abide by the 6-foot distance between student desks to protect all parties at school.

Sincerely,
Mindy Nakashima-Inouye
Kapolei Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

michelle heaviside <michellemybell3333@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing in support of a 6ft distance between students and masks worn in the classroom by students, staff and teachers.
I am a special education teacher at King Intermediate school and a parent of a special needs 5th grade student in elementary school. I do not feel safe as a teacher working and providing direction instruction to students without using masks in the classroom and keeping a 6 feet distance between adults and students.
As a parent I do not feel comfortable sending my child to school without my child and all students, teachers and adults keeping a 6 feet distance and wearing masks in and out of the classroom.
I implore the DOE to keep our students, school staff and Teachers safe. I do not feel safe going back to work with out these precautions in place.
The DOE needs to take care of us all in the safest manner as possible and I do not believe a 3 feet distance between others and non wearing of masks in class will be enough to keep us safe.
I plead again to the DOE that more safe precautions are needed with wearing masks in class and keeping 6ft distances between others when school reopens . I will not feel safe sending my special needs child to school and going back to school to teach without these precautions in place.
Sincerely,
Michelle Murphy
Special Education Teacher
King Intermediate School

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 2020-2021 School Year. Testimony.

garyige0219@hawaiiantel.net <garyige0219@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Education:

As a lifetime citizen of the state of Hawaii, and proud graduate of Hawaii's public education system, I submit my concerns regarding the reopening of our school system. I observe that we are squarely in the midst of a pandemic of epic proportion, with our economy and education system in a lock down. The pandemic has not yet been brought under control. All should agree that the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are of foremost concern, and that the schools can only be reopened after thoughtful safety precautions are firmly in place. There should never be a rush to compromise on safety, just to reopen. Safety must always be paramount!

1. Everyone in the classroom must be required to wear a mask at all times, unless excepted because of a medical condition.

2. The Hawaii Department of Education must adhere to a 6 feet distancing in the class room. Let us not forget that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recommended a 6 foot distancing in all instances where 2 or more people are gathered together. To date, I am not aware of any exception to this recommendation that has been endorsed by the CDC. The 6 foot distancing requires that student desks must be kept 6 feet apart. The size of many classrooms may be problematic, but anything less than the 6 foot distancing to address this problem would be unwise and most of all, dangerous.

Thank you for considering my concerns. Please keep our students, teachers and staff safe!

Gary S. Ige

Aloha Board of Education Members,
I am a 5th grade teacher 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.

I don't believe our students who cough and sneeze will remember to cover their mouth/nose to prevent the droplets from flying many feet forward (coughs spray droplets for 5 feet- or more, sneezes are even worse). I am concerned that if even one student is positive for COVID-19, that it will spread and my students and I are at risk. At six feet apart, students and teachers will be able to have mask breaks more often.

Lastly, I have just lost my husband recently (April 2020) I am the sole caretaker of my daughters. 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. With COVID-19 cases soaring (41 on 7/7/2020) there needs to be a solid and healthy plan and solution before we start school. This is for the safety of our children, faculty, staff and families. 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.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

Florence Kawamura
5th grade teacher
Ala Wai Elementary

TESTIMONY

Stacey Dela Cruz <sdelacru2004@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:01 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@BOE.HAWAII.GOV" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

- Stacey Lynn Dela Cruz Reese Hoʻokele Elementary School, Special Education Teacher
- 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 an inclusion Special Education teacher and I am worried for the safety of my students, my family, fellow teachers and myself to the increased exposure to COVID-19. Children can be carries of the virus and may not show symptoms that we are being asked to visually check daily.
- During the DOH webinar held on July 1, 2020 and released via email on July 6, 2020, Dr. Park stated that face coverings in a class is not needed, since they will all be in that same classroom day in and day out. The concern of 3ft vs 6ft was discussed and Dr. Park explained that with the caveat that students are facing the same direction and stationary. In what classroom has anyone ever been to where that is possible? I've worked educating children from preschool up until middle school age and children do not always follow rules even in times of great urgency. Children need movement and being confined to a 3ft bubble is not going to help the situation. I work with students whom cannot handle sitting for long period and need to move around the class, now the BOE is saying the 3ft distance is feasible and this will help keep my students safe. Over the past years we engrained in students to feel comfortable in the classroom and now we are restricting them because of the BOE wants 3ft instead of 6ft. At least with 6ft distancing there is some cushion for students to have some type of movement.
- No temperature checks, no need for face masks and having teachers do "visual" checks is absurd. Teachers are superheroes but we are not doctors, nurse or health aides. We are not trained to detect and determine if a child is showing any type of symptoms. I am a mother of 3 and I know when my keiki is sick, however, that should be a parents/guardians job not an educators job. Over the years, I've dealt with many sick children as my own students whom I've had a part in keeping them safe and healthy. It should be parent/guardian standing with their child to get temperature checks prior to stepping on any school campus to ensure the safety of all. Parents and guardians have always fallen back onto the education system to be

their child's sitter/daycare provider/counselor/parent. Not until COVID-19 did some parents really know what it was like to spend 24/7 with their own children.

- The BOE needs to think of the safety of all. Without teachers, there would be no jobs, no other professions, no economy. The world needs teachers and it is time for the world and BOE to stand up and protect us and the Keiki's, instead of putting teachers and the Keiki's on the back burners. Threatening us with pay cuts, furloughs or layoffs NEEDS TO STOP!!!!!! Without the teachers, there is no education system. STAND UP AND PROTECT ALL OF US!

Stacey Lynn Dela Cruz Reese

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

— **George Bernard Shaw**

July 6, 2020

Gail Platiro, Grandmother of 3 children attending a Public High School

General Business Meeting

Opening of schools

Oppose until all issues are addressed

I am just concerned that the social distancing issue has not been thoroughly discussed and addressed in all of its aspects.

Along with school attendance, the classroom set up and meals/cafeteria set up, there must be talk of the school bus issue.

The buses for the Royal Kunia/Village Park community are overcrowded. On a daily basis, students are left behind to wait for a bus to unload the first group then return to pick up those left behind. If the bus couldn't accommodate the number of students during a regular school year, how will they accommodate the students – with proper social distancing during this upcoming school year. Students are only allowed a handful of tardies but shouldn't be penalized if the tardy is not their doing.

As for the distance learning, I believe my grandchildren fared well during the covid shutdown. Their teachers guided them through the assignments and responded to their questions and concerns by text, email or while they were in their "Zoom" classes.

I see no reason to rush into opening the schools until there is a safe plan in place. Otherwise you'll have students, teachers and staff exposing themselves to possible infection and taking it home to their families.

Thank you.

Gmail

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

Testimony against 3 feet distance

Sherry Kahawaii <skahawaii@nahonu.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I Sherry Kahawaii a teacher of 30+ years is in disagreement with the 3 feet apart distance that the DOE is suggesting. It is crazy and not safe for us as teachers or for the students themselves. Please revise your thinking and keep us all safe.
Mahalo nui,
Sherry

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cheryl Nomiyama <cnomiyam@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:04 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.

This directly contradicts our agreement with the state and 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.”

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. 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.

For the health and safety of our keiki and our fellow teachers, I am asking every board member to honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Mahalo,
Cheryl Nomiyama
Waipahu Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sandy Linskey <linskeys@knights.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am addressing 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 Castle High School and have grandchildren that attend Hahaione Elementary School. While I understand the logistics of not having enough room to social distance 6 feet , it is imperative for the health of the students and teachers that this distance be maintained. We are in uncharted territory with the Covid19 virus, we don't know the extent of risk to our children. We must put their health first.
Sincerely ,
Sandy Linskey

Sandy Linskey
Castle High School
E Ola Pono Project

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Kaku <harumi864@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:09 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern:

Aloha. My name is Michelle Kaku and I am an educator at Hilo Intermediate School. I am writing my testimony in response to Discussion Item IV(A): Presentation on D.O.E.'s Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

My first question is why is the B.O.E. allowing 3-feet social distancing when everywhere else in public is 6 feet? If the B.O.E. should allow this, we are sending the students mixed messages. It is important that all rules should be consistent that way all students know what to expect regardless if they are in school or in public.

Another thing, I am not comfortable working in a classroom when students are placed 3-feet apart from each other. Adolescents do not understand the concept of keeping their hands or feet to themselves and it is in our nature to be social, especially if our peers are in the same room with us. With this being said, I feel that if students were placed 6 feet apart from each other, there would be less occurrences of them having the need to "touch" each other.

I feel that if we take every safety precautions necessary to keep our keiki's safe, we would prevent having to go 100% virtual again. I really missed my students the last few weeks after Spring Break and I really don't want a repeat of that for this upcoming school year.

Thank you for your time reading my testimony, and I hope you will take into consideration of changing the seating arrangements to 6 feet apart instead of 3.

Sincerely,
Michelle

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Chung, Gabrielle <gabrielle.chung@kalakauamiddle.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:09 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 Gabrielle Chung and I am a sixth grade math teacher at Kalākaua Middle School and am a parent of a soon to be fourth grader at Pū'ohala Elementary School.

We need to keep our children and families safe. Three feet of social distancing is not acceptable. I do appreciate that my school has taken some precautions of social distancing within six feet, other schools may not be so lucky. Having "ohana bubbles" and keeping children together is not the miracle answer. You have to keep in mind, when students are on their own personal time, they are in multiple bubbles.

Children are known to be carriers of multiple germs. As adults, we are strongly encouraged to distance from each other at least six feet. It's ironic that children do not need to abide by the same rules.

In addition, we must mandate that all students to wear masks. I know it is hot. That is where we need to get more funding to better cool down our classrooms. It is not fair to everyone to not make it required.

There will be students from not even attending school at all to not following any rules because of the lack of rules.

I want to return to the classroom. I want my child to return to school. Please make it safe for my daughter and myself.

Sincerely,
Gabrielle Chung

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Gmail

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

6ft distancing Testimony

Shana English <shanaann@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:09 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education,

After working 18 years in a health care facility I shifted my career to become an elementary teacher. I have been enjoying teaching for 6 year, up until this pandemic I felt safe. I feel that it is imperative that the DOE follows CDC's recommendation. Schools should not be compromising the safety of their students as well as teachers. Being together on a daily basis under lower standards puts all our families at risk.

Mahalo
Shana English

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jade Bright <jade.bright@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:10 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 Jade Bright, teacher & Academic Coach at Ahuimanu Elementary.
I am also a parent of a child that attends King Intermediate 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**. We need follow the recommendations of the CDC. Teachers need to be protected just as much as the students should be. Packing students in a classroom with only 3 feet distance apart does not help with COVID mitigation.

Let's follow the recommendations of the CDC and adhere to 6feet social distancing whenever possible.

Thank you.

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

Testimony

Erin Mickelsen <e.m.mickelsen7828@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:10 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 Erin Mickelsen and I work as a 3rd grade teacher at Waihee Elementary School.

We have adopted Model B which may allow children to be kept 6 feet apart. 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, 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."

It is not fair and safe to go back to 3 feet when we agreed upon 6 feet like everywhere else in the country. I do not think it is okay to sacrifice teachers' lives and the lives of their families just to get kids back to school.

Thank you,

Erin Mickelsen

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Testimony

D. Gray <dgraysong@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Dee Ann Gray and I am a teacher at Wahiawa Middle School.

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.

We were given our school's plan for the fall, and were told that students could be socially distanced at 3 feet apart and remove their masks when seated at desks facing the same way.

This directive does not meet the CDC guidelines for 6 feet of social distancing between people or wearing masks when in enclosed areas.

This directive also does not honor our contractual agreement to have classrooms configured with 6 feet of distance between student desks.

For the health and safety of our keiki and fellow teachers, please honor our agreement and clarify that the safe distance is 6 feet with students wearing masks in enclosed areas.

Thank you,

Dee Ann Gray

Gmail

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

Testimony

Heather Mahan <heather.mahan3@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:10 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 in a high risk category due to asthma. The 6 feet spacing is important to me as an older teacher.
Heather Mahan
Royal School

Sent from my iPhone

TESTIMONY

Nancy Halley <nancy_halley@baldwin.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:10 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 very concerned about the D.O.E's direct contradiction of the agreement reached between the HSTA and the state, based on recommendations by the CDC regarding student spacing and wearing masks.

I have not felt comfortable with the 6ft "when possible" sentence as I see it as a loophole to change it.....and look what the D.O.E. has done....the D.O.E. is saying 3 feet apart with students facing forward and masks are optional is okay.

I dare you all to come and teach in that situation when schools re-open, which at this time happens to coincide with opening our airports to other U.S. states where Covid cases are growing exponentially. Many of our students' families work in the tourism industry. The risk of Covid19 outbreaks will be intensifying in Hawaii and we need to be very, very strict when opening our schools or you will be shutting them down again as other countries have had to do.

6 feet apart, wearing masks and washing hands is the minimum we can do to protect our community. Why is the D.O.E. sabotaging that? It will be impossible for students to be 100% compliant with these minimal requirements and at 3 feet apart, there is no way students will stay facing forward and not turn or stand up to touch, talk and socialize with students within arms reach during a 45 to 60 minute class.

The simple act of breathing, singing, coughing, sneezing, laughing and unintentional spitting (which I have done while speaking in class) reportedly expels droplets from a persons' mouth at least 3 feet and up to 18 feet with the help of a simple breeze. We have been told to keep the air circulating - windows open is better than a closed classroom with A/C (another crazy issue...why are we starting during the hottest months when because of Covid19, A/C in an enclosed space is not recommended)....and you want kids to sit closer together (3ft) in the summer heat than our agreement with the state (6ft)?

The situation is frightening and ridiculous really. It's important to adhere to the 6 feet rule and to have students and staff wear masks at a minimum.

The goal is for schools to remain open and be safe. Your new guideline about 3ft spacing and not requiring masks is putting this goal at risk. It's also putting students, families and staff at risk. The D.O.E. seems to be concerned about being sued all the time. I wonder how many lawsuits could result in you going against CDC recommendations and the MOU agreement between the HSTA and the state?

I am 3 years away from retiring at 62. As school approaches, I struggle daily with the question, "Do I hang on for 3 years for the money and benefits or do I quit now and enjoy a far less stressful and more safe next few years?" I've heard other teachers make similar comments. I'm concerned for

myself because I'm 59. I'm concerned for my colleagues with health issues and some that are older than me. I'm very concerned for my students because they will not be able to social distance....they go to school to socialize. They will also be exposed through their parents who work in tourism.

I know it won't be easy to comply to spacing students 6 feet apart and having them wear masks, but rise up and get with the program. Life isn't easy. We've been challenged to keep our community safe and to help out our medical workers. Rise up D.O.E. Stick to our agreement about 6 feet distancing and wearing masks. It's the least you could do.

Respectfully and seriously worried,
Nancy Halley
Biology and Chemistry Teacher
H.P. Baldwin High School

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Mission The mission of BHS is to develop a community of learners who have the competence and confidence to achieve personal goals and who are responsible stewards of our global community.

Nancy Halley
Chemistry and Biology
H.P. Baldwin High School
1650 Kaahumanu Ave.
Wailuku, HI 96793
School 808-727-3200, Classroom 727-3228
nancy_halley@baldwin.k12.hi.us

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Ahn <michelle_ahn@kwes.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:11 PM
To: 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 Michelle Ahn. I am a second grade teacher at Kalihi Waena Elementary. We primarily serve the students living in the low-income housing at Kuhio Park Terrace. My class size will be 27 students this school year, and I do not feel safe or comfortable being in such tight quarters with my students only 3 feet apart from each other and with me. As very recently agreed between HSTA and BOE, students in meeting spaces should be spaced 6 feet apart. Please honor the agreement painstakingly created to protect the health of students, faculty, and staff. While I am dedicated to teaching my students, I am very concerned about their health as well as mine. In addition, I reside next to my 92-year old grandmother, and she relies on me for her various needs. I do not want to be the cause of her being infected with Covid-19 at her age and with her underlying health conditions. That would be heart-breaking for me. Her daughter, my mom, was my best friend who passed away 5 years ago from a rare form of cancer, and now my grandma has become even more dear to me. Please help to protect my health so that I can be there for my grandma. I am advocating to work in safe conditions, which are students being distanced at a minimum of 6 feet, as described by the CDC. I want to be healthy so that I can remain at work and be there for my students. Should I be quarantined after being in such close quarters with students all day, my students' education would be uncertain. With the significantly reduced school budget and the hiring freeze, a substitute teacher would be either too costly or not possible to obtain. I propose we open the schools in a way that is safe and sustainable in the long run for everyone.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Michelle Ahn

Gmail

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

Testimony

dwayne abuel <dabuel247@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Dwayne Abuel, teacher at Highlands Intermediate School. I have been teaching for over 20+ years.

I am deeply concerned with the ignoring of the six feet distance in classrooms making distances three feet facing the same direction. We have tried this in summer school and I have to say it does not keep anyone safe! NOT SAFE! My health is already not good and I could easily catch COVID-19. Luckily I have kept away as much as I can. Plus wash up. Cleaning materials will run out quickly the way I see it, based on summer school.

First, if six feet is the safe distance why are our leaders putting us, the frontline, in danger?!

Second, I feel we should get hazard pay. My friend got COVID and came out with a huge bill plus taxes and although my friend only paid taxes he now faces working to age 80 just to pay off the taxes and also recovery rehab payments. He cannot return to work due to his physical condition.

Third, we are not part of any planning. Even at our school, we do not have good thinkers in leadership. They themselves seem to think three feet is enough even though they clearly changed one classroom to six feet. My classroom is smaller and it also has to be air con. I experienced windows open, that is still dangerous! Especially with no wind. Students are not required to wear masks on top of that.

Last, cleaning before and after takes so much class time. It is just ridiculous. The total time is about 20 min to do a good job in cleaning.

Why are people who are not on the frontline making dangerous decisions for us and not giving us pay and PPE, especially when some of us have health concerns putting us at risk?

Can you help us at least change three feet to six feet distancing in the classroom?

Mahalo,

Dwayne Abuel
Teacher and IT
Highlands Intermediate School

Sent

Gmail

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

Re: 6 ft distancibv

DJ Woodard <dwoodard@maili.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:14 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
I'm currently teaching ESY and having to deal with spitting and spreading their boogers all over the place is not safe for other students, staff members, myself and most importantly my family! Is it worth the health risk of everyone in my room? I demand that we follow the 6 ft rule. If our colleges demand that for adults...why are we not following it for our Keith's? All businesses follow 6ft guidelines but not our public schools? How would the higher ups feel if they had to teach students who constantly spit n spread germs all day? I really want someone to model a safe distance lesson while teaching challenging students? Would they want to take the risk everyday home to their family? We don't even get paid enough to take the daily risk with our health n our families safety!

Testimony

jennifer pang <jpang@hickamfalcons.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I would like to submit my testimony 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 Jennifer Pang. I am a first grade teacher at Hickam Elementary. I have been a K-1 educator in Hawaii for the past 20 years. 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. 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 HIDOE 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 HIDOE's guidance on 3 feet social distancing and no mask requirements.

I just completed teaching our incoming first graders at our school's summer learning hub. Due to the limited class size (8 students, 1 EA, and myself), I felt safe because I could have my students physically distanced six feet for the four hours we were in school. We also all wore masks during the school day with the exception of being at our tables and eating or drinking. However, we still had a scare in the second week with a family member being sick and another returning from a trip.

With the number of cases rising daily, I am scared to return to the classroom where I would need to fit 20+ students in a room where it is not possible to physically distance along with the no mask guideline that the DOH and AAP have put out. I love my kids. I missed being in school the last quarter. I want to be back in school. However, I shouldn't have to put the health and safety of my students, my elderly parents, and myself in jeopardy.

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 on campus regardless of their age.

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.

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Aoi Shinagawa <aois@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the music teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School in Ewa Beach, Hawai'i. I am emailing regarding concerns I have in relation to 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 by the suggested three-foot social distancing. It is imperative that we follow CDC guidelines and that the agreement with the state is honored and that the BOE follows the recommended six-feet social distancing. This is crucial for the health and safety of our teachers, staff, students, and their families.

I suffer from a medical condition called dysautonomia. This condition causes a variety of symptoms including GI issues, inflammation, orthostatic intolerance, and more. Although I do not normally have issues in my day-to-day life, these symptoms are exacerbated by any type of infection I get. In addition to this, the symptoms I have when fighting mild infections such as the common cold are magnified in comparison to a normal person. For example, my partner caught a cold and rested for two days before going back to normal. I caught the same cold and had such severe swelling in my throat that I could not properly eat and breathe, requiring strong antibiotics and steroids to treat. I have been extremely cautious during this time as I fear how my body would react to being infected by the COVID-19 virus.

Social distancing protocols of 3 feet would make it impossible for me to take the precautions I need in order to be safe. This forces me to choose between my safety and my job. This is something that has been weighing on my mind since the reopening plan was announced. Should I risk my well-being to continue working in the job I love? Or should I quit the job I've always wanted in order to protect my own health?

I am sure that I am not the only educator in this type of situation. There are other high-risk educators and students with high-risk family members. How are families to feel safe knowing their children are in close contact with other potentially infected students and staff on a daily basis? The BOE must follow the CDC recommended six-feet social distancing guidelines in order to allow everybody to have as safe an experience as possible.

Stay safe,

Aoi Shinagawa

Gmail

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

Testimony for Discussion Item VI

Melissa Torres Lopez <mgtorlop06@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:19 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello,
My name is Melissa Torres-Lopez and I am writing to the Board of Education to testify on Discussion Item VI, regarding schools' placement of desks being only 3 feet apart. My daughter is going to be a senior this school year at Waianae High School, and it is a huge concern to me that the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools says that desks will be set 3 feet apart. Throughout restaurants and grocery stories there are rules stating that customers must be 6 feet apart, and hearing that schools will be placing desks half the amount of that has me worried about my child's safety against the corona virus. At home I take care of my 97-year-old mother and my daughter helps me take care of her as well, if desks will only be 3 feet apart that puts not only my daughter but my whole family at risk. If this 3-feet apart rule stays, I don't think my daughter will be able to go to school in person. I urge the DOE to make sure desks will be 6 feet apart.

Mahalo,
Melissa Torres-Lopez

To Whom It May Concern:

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

My name is Anne Alves and I am a teacher in the Leeward district on the island of Oahu. I, like many others, are very worried about the safety of returning to our school sites given that COVID is again on the rise in our state. Don't get me wrong, I look forward to seeing my students again and returning to in-person school. However, we can only return to school if the health and safety of our students and school staff are truly the number one priority.

Following CDC recommendations for the reopening of schools means that schools must "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart" to reduce risk. Those who cannot maintain a 6 distance are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. The memorandum of understanding signed by both the HSTA and the 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 whenever possible." I was shocked, to say the least, when I read the "Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan" and again when I heard Superintendent Kishimoto reiterate to reporters that schools "could modify down to three feet of spacing as long as students were facing forward." Not only is this dangerous to our keiki and to teachers, but it also violates the agreement previously signed.

Additionally, it is absolutely ludicrous that the HIDOE's stance is that "if students are sitting three feet apart, and facing the same way, wearing a mask is not required." For months now we have been practicing social distancing of a minimum of six feet distance between each other and always wearing a face covering when leaving the house. Businesses can only reopen if they are able to follow such guidelines. Many restaurants are still keeping their dining areas closed and only opening for take-out because they cannot ensure adequate space between patrons. How is it that our employer is now, against CDC recommendations, demanding we return with only half the recommended distance between people and no face coverings? It is common knowledge that schools are "cesspools for viruses". And now, with cases on the rise, we are expected to go back to school without even following the CDC guidelines for our safety? Not only is this very dangerous, but it is also a clear violation of the resolution passed by the BOE claiming that 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." The Board of Education needs to do its part now to ensure the safety of our teachers and our keiki. Please don't let us down.

Respectfully,
Anne Alves

Testimony. Safe 6 ft. Distancing

STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE <stephenieblakemore@sbcglobal.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:23 PM
Reply-To: "kndlve22@gmail.com" <kndlve22@gmail.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>
Cc: Governor David Ige <governor.ige@hawaii.gov>

No. Simply no. We must have 6 ft. Wear a mask.
Safety is no accident.
And the plan is far too vague.
Who takes the student, staff and faculty temperatures? With what?
What kind of risks are you, the BOE willing to take with the safety of our communities because no one could come up with a realistic, cohesive and SAFE plan?
How hard is it to use those protocals of safe distancing that are already in place in our communities? We should not even be spending a lot of time reinventing the wheel that already works regarding a relaxation of what is safe to 3 feet apart.
There are other problems beyond discussing safe procedures we already have used in our comminities and that we already know how to follow. Here are a few of the additional concerns.

1. Some classrooms are too small and the rosters are too large to accommodate 1/2 the roster with various plans for safe distance learning being considered. What happens in this case? We already have a shortage of teachers.
2. How will learning be possible if we are wearing masks when the classrooms where we teach will reach 90+ degrees in August and September by 11 am? You are aware the air conditioning issue is still not a resolved issue...right? Not all classrooms have them...and now having a.c. is not considered as safe a way to reopen our classrooms in the age of CV19 as it is to have open windows with outdoor air circulating. Using both makes sense. Some classrooms do not have either. (Decades of financial and infrastructure negligience has come back to haunt Hawaii's schools, again.) Masks or no masks, classrooms are too hot in August.
3. How is it that we are going to start the school year without ensuring all teachers have had the training and time to practice ways to deliver quality instruction virtually? We also need quality regarding 5he training...not trainers who spentcan afternoon in a webinar.
4. How are the remote learning centers coming along? Knowing they are in place and how they are to be run impacts our choices regarding each school picking a plan to implement, which happens prior to July 8...the day of the BOE meeting.
5. Has anyone taken a moment to consider how the different models being presented as choice for each school will create their own issues regarding equity...and that includes legal issues, yes?
6. Additionally within the plans some teachers will need to do more work than others just by virtue of trying to follow the model of seeing students daily and having to prep lessons for delivery online and in person. This is blatently unfair...and inequitable, especially to primary and Sped teachers. The re-negotiated contract clause that provides work time during the teaching day for assessment and IEP meetings of up to 3 hours per SpEd student (principals would hire a a sub to do teaching) as a means to address the overload of work placed on SpEd teachers is particularly and remarkably ignorant. May I add insulting? If SpEd students are among the identified vulnerable students who should be seen daily then how does placing them with a sub address that thinking? This solution continues to try to look away from finding real solutions to address the workload for SpEd teachers. We are teachers. Solutions should prioritize our time in the classroom with our students. Paperwork and assessments can be addressed in more logical ways...if you would allow that input.

It has been over two months since the March closure of classrooms. We should have comprehensive and complete plans in place with the how tos... (being flexible and making improvements as plans go into practice is a given). The proposed plans are not. Vague words and jargon; vulnerable students, supports, blended learning, hybrid learning; are thrown around in these plans as if they were specifically defined persons and procedures. Yes, education as a profession is somehow, ironically, loaded with such veiled attempts to communicate via jargon, but today in 2020 we are in a situation, due to CV19, where we must be clear about what we intend to do.
Teachers are being asked to make decisions on choosing models of reopening from a selection of choices that are not clearly thought out on terms of physical and emotional safety as well as the necessary logistics regarding training and time in the day as to how to deliver within those models.

I am beyond disappointed and discouraged by the plan to reopen.
This was an opportunity to rethink the delivery of instruction and education in Hawaii. All (BOE, DOE, HSTA) parties have dropped the ball.
Our keiki, parents and teachers will bear the brunt of this incredible incompetence. Hawaii deserves better.

"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."

John F. Kennedy

Stephenie Blakemore
Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android

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

Testimony

Kuuipo DeRego <kuuipo@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:24 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.

My name is Ku‘uipo DeRego and I am speaking as a teacher. I currently teach at Kailua Elementary School.

I am sending in a testimony to state how uncomfortable I am with the allowance of 3 feet spacing in a classroom. Not only does this put your employees at risk, but also those who you hope to serve - our students. With COVID-19 cases beginning to spike around Hawaii., it is risky to expect teachers and students to only stand 3 feet apart when most other occupations are required to be 6 feet apart. The CDC and state governments expect 6 feet apart in literally every other setting, so why not in a classroom? The idea of making students face forward the entire school time is not feasible. Children are very social and will seek to talk to and collaborate with peers. It saddens me to see the risks that will be taken as we reopen schools with these guidelines. We all want to be back in schools, but at what cost?

Sincerely,

Ku‘uipo DeRego

Gmail

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

Testimony

Caitlin Ramirez <caitlinrebekah@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a public school librarian and public school parent of a third grader and a kindergartner. I want my students and my children to return to school safely, which means, among other things, ensuring six feet of space between classmates in the classroom. This is the distance recommended by the CDC and enforced in public spaces as well as commercial spaces like banks, supermarkets, and pharmacies. Please protect our children by allowing no less than six feet in the classroom.

Mahalo,
Caitlin Ramirez
Mokapu Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

kklove2shop@yahoo.com <kklove2shop@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:28 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am writing in regard to Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

My child went to summer school at Lincoln Elementary. He really enjoyed it. He said he felt safe because there were only seven students in his class, they took his temperature before he went to school, everyone wore a mask, and they washed their hands a lot. Most important was how hard his teacher worked to keep them safe and learning at the same time. My son is not the best student and hasn't always been positive about school. But he couldn't stop talking about how hard his teacher worked and how much he loved summer school. I knew I had to listen to what he had to say.

He said that they sat every other desk so that both sessions had their own seat. They did a math lesson in class. They put desks four-feet and six-feet apart. He said there was a huge difference and that he wouldn't feel safe with the four-feet distance. He talked about students moving and touching neighboring desks. He also said that they can't put seats in the back of the class or students can't see, hear, or pay attention. They could barely fit 16 desks in their classroom.

We obviously need to reopen our schools. But we need to do so with our children and teachers' health and safty as our top priority. At the same time, we need to create the best environment for students to learn and teachers to teach. I have been reading about the safe distance between desks. But to do this, the schools need help in getting more teachers and other resources. For once, let's put our public school students first. Let's not just "settle" and say 3-feet is "good enough." I have already talked to other parents. If they don't promise that the classroom will be safe and limit class size, they will keep their children at home. Are you really ready to risk putting young children at risk? We have a huge teacher shortage. If you want to keep them you need to support them.

For our students and for our teachers...they deserve six-feet!

Thank you for letting me expess my opinion.

Sincerely,

Kathy T Killion

Gmail

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

Testimony

Marsha Rogers <revmarsha@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please keep social distancing
Six feet apart in the schools
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony for July 9, 2020 General Business Meeting

Debra Yamakawa <debyamakawa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:30 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Honorable Board Members,

My name is Debra Yamakawa, Teacher for HI DOE. I am submitting testimony for the agenda item VI:
DOE reopening schools plan for SY 2020-2021.

I oppose 3' distancing as being acceptable. I support mandating 6' social distancing in classrooms to help reduce the chance of students, teachers, and staff becoming infected with COVID-19.

I understand that for certain populations, such as the medically fragile special education students, 6' distancing may not be possible. However, I believe that for the majority of our classes, 6' distancing, along with mask or shield wearing in class, should be a requirement.

Although younger people are less likely to die or become severely ill from COVID-19, doesn't mean this won't happen. I also live with family members who are in the high risk category, and would more likely die from this.

I hope we don't wait till students, teachers or staff die before making stringent safety measures mandatory. The CDC guidelines for reopening schools also recommends 6' distancing. See link to CDC below.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

Having everyone wear a mask has also shown to significantly reduce the spread of viruses. https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/06/417906/still-confused-about-masks-heres-science-behind-how-face-masks-prevent

Educating students is extremely important, but health and safety should be the priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kris Hunt <krishunt65@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kristen Hunt, my child is a student at Cheifess Kamakahele Middle School in Lihue, Kauai Island. I wish to present testimony on the following 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 an agreement was made on the Reopening of Schools with HSTA and the BOE, the HIDOE released it's Health and Safety Guidance stating that 3 feet apart WITHOUT masks was acceptable. This goes against the agreement made with the state, as well as what the CDC recommends of 6 feet or two arms length distance. As a parent of a middle school student, I am appalled by the thought of allowing my child to be put at increased risk. Proper social distancing for the health and safety of our keiki and teachers is vital to the health and safety of all of us, particularly on our small island with limited resources. My husband and I are seriously considering alternate education methods for our child should this ruling stand.

Please reconsider this decision and abide by the 6ft social distancing and masks worn at ALL times, especially indoors or confined areas.

Thank you for reconsidering this decision.

Kristen Hunt
Parent, CKMS student
Kauai, Hawaii

Gmail

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

Disagreed for 3ft apart for certain ages when school opened

Jerrie Siau <jerriesiau@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:34 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

We are the parents from Wilson Elementary School. My one and only daughter who is going to 4th grade when school starts.
We are worry if only certain ages are 3feet apart. We are confused why 3ft apart for certain ages and 6ft apart for college students.
It should not be discriminated for any ages. Please think about if your child is assigned to 3ft apart, how do you feel?
If the kid has existing condition or weak immune system fall under 3ft apart and contracted the virus, what is going to happen?

Please please please do NOT do that. We rather distance learning or go to school for certain days then having 3ft apart if there is another options for this.

Thank you.
Jerrie Siau-Chua
Parents from Wilson Elementary School
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Joe Cho <jchofamily52@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:36 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
My name is
Joseph Cho
Teacher at McKinley
9th Grade Social Studies
We should stick to the 6 ft, Social Distance
Keep the students as well as everyone safe
Mahalo
Joe Cho
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Paige Kemerer <paigekemerer@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:37 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 Paige Kemerer. I am a teacher at Kapa'a Elementary School. I am concerned about the lack of social distancing that will be allowed in our schools when they reopen and I believe the BOE should mandate 6 feet of social distancing and the use of masks. 3 feet is not enough distance to ensure the health of our students and staff. The CDC recommends students be seated 6 feet away from one another. The state even mandates people stay 6 feet away from others everywhere from grocery stores to restaurants. Yet it is deeply concerning there is no mandate for schools. This difference in policy makes it seem like we are valuing the health and lives of our children and educators less than others and that is unacceptable. It is also concerning to me that masks are recommended but not required for students. As an elementary school teacher, I understand that younger students may have difficulty wearing a mask in the classroom. However, there is no reason older students shouldn't wear a mask in classrooms. Students in grades 6-12 are old enough to know the importance of wearing a mask to protect others and are able to wear one properly. If we can use masks as another tool to keep people safe than why are we not? Masks for older students should be a requirement not a recommendation. I urge the BOE to mandate 6 feet social distancing in schools and require masks be worn by older students. Is education truly the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world or is it going to be the most powerful way to spread COVID-19? Our students and educators shouldn't be used as test subjects to find out.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Dolly Kanekuni <dolly.kanekuni@hawaiichildrenstheatre.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:38 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.

According to the CDC, the proper social distancing for the health and safety of our keiki and teachers is 6 feet (NOT 3 feet).

Aloha,
Dolly Kanekuni
President, HCT

Gmail

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

Testimony

Julie Dicker <jcdicker@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the DOE,

I am a teacher at Lahainaluna High School approaching my 29 th year of teaching. I love working with students and I am so proud of my school. The last quarter was particularly difficult for both staff and students, yet teachers , including myself ,stepped up and learned how to use distance learning for our students with actually only a week of planning. We did this for an entire quarter.

Now here we are ready to reopen schools in a few weeks and your decision to disregard the MOU but more importantly the practice of social distancing of 6 feet. How can you justify this?
How can you ask teachers, students and parents to accept your 3 feet no mask requirement when everything in our state is 6 feet with a mask. This is not just the practice of our state but the entire country.

It appears you only care about cramming students in classes ,as you always have, with total disregard for the state practices in all other businesses and in recreation and have total disregard for the health and safety of our students and staff.

There is no justification on the DOE's part that could warrant the 3 foot distance. The Superintendent did a very poor job trying to explain this on the news this morning. The state won't even allow visitors and claim that the cases are rising. DOE is blatantly ignoring this. What good is an agreement (MOU) if the DOE comes up with their own rules. My concern is for the safety of my students, myself and the staff not only of my school but every school.

Let the governor tell the entire state that 3 feet is all that is required to social distance. Then I will be on board.

Sincerely,

Julie Dicker

Gmail

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

Testimony

Joy Shlachter <jshlachter@kaaawaschool.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:39 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 Joy Shlachter, a teacher at Ka`a`awa 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. It is dangerous for students and teachers to be spaced 3ft apart. Health and safety should be a priority for students and staff.

Joy Shlachter

Gmail

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

Testimony

Hans Kurz <hanskurz@usa.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:39 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 Hans Kurz, and my spouse is a teacher at Kailua Intermediate school.

I oppose, in the strongest possible terms, any plan to reopen schools that does not conform to guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Please reconsider any reopening plan that ignores the sound advice of epidemiologists for the sake of convenience.

Very truely yours,

- Hans Kurz

Gmail

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

Testimony

D Chang <dchang4@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

July 7, 2020

Dear Board Members,

Hi! My name is Darlene Chang. I am a teacher at Kapolei High and would like to provide testimony for Discussion Item IV(A) Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for re-opening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

For the health and safety for all, I am asking that the DOE follow 6 feet social distancing, mandate (not just "encourage") face masks be worn, and follow all CDC guidelines. We want to take all of the precautions necessary to keep all staff and students as safe as possible. I personally am at risk and am very concerned about a lack of strict enforcement of safety guidelines when I hear that some schools are spacing young children 3 feet apart and masks are not part of dress code or as needed as the clothes we regularly wear. With the scare of an employee at Hoaeae Summer Fun Center testing positive to the Corona virus to the 41 new cases today, it is of utmost importance that we follow strict guidelines at school because we don't want people to get this virus without a cure and we don't want casualties. First thing that came to mind with the Hoaeae incident and today's high number is that when school opens, the same thing could very well happen, but at a much larger scale due to the large amount of people gathering in a contained space for a length of time.

With the shortage of teachers, who will teach our children if they become ill and where will our future be without students learning as much as they can? Please help us ensure the best practices possible for the safety of all.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

/Darlene Chang/

Darlene Chang

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

(no subject)

William Howard <william_howard@universitylaboratoryschool.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:41 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it may Concern,

Please consider changing guidelines regarding student distancing from 3 feet to 6 feet! I am an educator in the McKinley district and feel strongly about mandating staff and students to be 6 feet apart at all times to minimize the spread of COVID.

Thank You,

Will Howard

Gmail

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

Prevention is monumental for School re-opening plans

Michael Olschafskie <olschafskie@whea.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the BOE,

We all want schools to re-open and students to be in the classroom. I think that goes without saying. Teaching on-line at the end of last school year was not optimal for students academic progress; something else I think we can all agree on. However, opening schools with out a well thought out, realistic plan, with the understanding that no plan will be perfect, will cause more issues this academic year.

The idea of placing students in a classroom only 3 feet apart without masks will certainly hinder the progression and continuity of the school year. This idea that goes against the CDC guidelines, which are in place for a valid reason, will potentially do more harm than good. The contraction of the Covid virus by some students, staff and teachers is inevitable. This will cause disruptions in the school and therefore in the education of the students. We need to limit this inevitably at all costs.

The potential of multiple teacher having to miss school, possibly for extended periods of time, as well as students, will disrupt the academic progress of the school year to detrimental effect. The number of available subs, which I'm sure will be less this year as older subs choose to stay home, is not sufficient and therefore will require schools to close altogether. We must prevent this at all costs in order to provide for as few disruptions as possible this academic year.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The prevention of the spread of this virus is our best hope for a successful 2020-2021 school year. The prevention must be the priority. Students 3 feet apart is not a successful strategy of prevention. This idea, which goes against the previously agreed on plans between the BOE and HSTA, as well as that of the CDC, is a recipe for disaster and academic chaos for the upcoming year. Please consider a different avenue which includes rotations of students in a hybrid model that can allow for proper 6 feet social distancing in the physical school setting.

Thank you for your time and be safe.

Sincerely,
Michael Olschafskie
Teacher, 8th Grade
West Hawaii Explorations Academy
Olschafskie@whea.net
--
Sincerely,
Michael Olschafskie
Teacher, 8th Grade
West Hawaii Explorations Academy
Olschafskie@whea.net

Testimony

tinaf1982 <tinaf1982@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on discussion VI(A)

Aloha,

My name is Christina Frolik and I am a special education teacher at Mililani Middle school. I am also a parent to a child that attends Mililani Middle. I am dying to get back into my classroom. I miss my coworkers and my students. This does not mean that I am willing to risk my life or the lives of my family.

I have family that are in the age range of 65+ and family that have underlying conditions. Even with the 6ft distance, I was nervous about starting school back up. My principal has made every effort to insure that we have safe procedures in place when we return. However, when attending our two admin days on July 1st and 2nd, I noticed that the desks were not 6ft or two arm lengths apart. The sudden change from 6ft to 3ft is irresponsible. I have students who live in multigenerational households. They could potentially carry COVID home and infect their family. I can't imagine the guilt a middle schooler would feel. Even now, I am unsure on how the SPED department is going to work. There is no way to ensure that my students won't share school supplies or food. Most students needed to borrow pencils before COVID. I cannot teach and watch for students who are showing signs of illness.

As a parent, I am very concerned for my child's education. I believe that online education can work. I am currently enrolled in the Master's program at UH Manoa. All of my classes are done online. It is possible. Will it be hard? Probably. I would rather teach my child how to be responsible for their own education and teach them to use a computer. It is the future anyway. As a parent, the thought of losing my own child breaks me. I don't know if she will be one to catch COVID and not survive. I am not willing to chance it. I passed by the field next to the middle school just the other day. Sports has returned, and while I'm happy about that, no one was wearing a mask. A large group of teens were huddled up starting football practice. Parents were sitting chair to chair with no masks. Not a single mask was worn by any of the approximately 50 people I saw. I know that some of those kids attend Mililani Middle. I know of two that are in my daughter's grade.

The cases in Hawaii are on the rise. We have a false sense of security being on an island. Having been born and raised, I'll admit that I don't take too much stock with what goes on on the Mainland. We don't have anywhere near the numbers of any state on the continental US. That false safety will only make this pandemic worse. As I write this testimony, we had 41 cases reported today. The highest number since the pandemic started. With places still shut down, we are seeing high numbers. To open schools and have thousands of children confined in classrooms is irresponsible. Our numbers will soar and our kupuna will be at greater risk. Again, many Hawaii families live in multigenerational households. Please reconsider your stance on opening schools at this time. With proper planning and training, online education can work.

Thank you

Christina Frolik

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S9+, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cindy Tamashiro <cctamashiro@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please honor the agreement made with HSTA regarding following the CDC guideline of social distancing of 6 feet. I am concerned for the health and safety of my students and myself as we will be putting ourselves in jeopardy with 3 feet distancing as 6 feet is required in most other settings. I am also very concerned that if I contract the coronavirus, I could become seriously ill. I am 65 years old and I am in the vulnerable age group. I do not want to be put in an unsafe environment and risk my life.

I am currently teaching Special Education ESY summer school and I have six students that I am teaching. Although we have set up routines and procedures for social distancing, I have found it difficult to always keep the students socially distanced in the classroom. We tried to follow the 6 feet social distancing guideline, but even with the small number of students it was extremely challenging. Young children naturally want to be close to their teacher and peers and it was sad to have to tell them that they need to keep apart from others. If the requirement is changed to 3 feet apart, the children will undoubtedly end up being even closer to that distance as they move around the classroom.

Please reconsider your position on this and put our health and safety ahead of numbers. Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Mahalo,
Cynthia Tamashiro

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jill Murashima <jill.murashima@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Jill Murashima and I am a teacher at August Ahrens Elementary.
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. First of all, the agreement between HSTA and DOE was to have students socially distanced whenever possible at least 6 feet apart, including inside the classroom. Allowing a minimum of 3 feet apart is unacceptable and a health risk according to the CDC. As a teacher, I need to feel safe to come to work everyday so that I can feel safe coming home to my family everyday. Secondly, if masks are mandated in all public spaces, then masks need to be mandated on school campuses in all spaces as well. Our state already has a huge teacher shortage. Health should be the most important concern and priority to keep our teachers like myself, in the classroom and able to do our job in a safe environment.
Respectfully,
Jill Murashima

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

Testimony

Jo-hannah Liz Valdez <jo-hannah_liz.valdez@campbell.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please reconsider the physical distancing guidelines, **3 feet for distancing is unsafe.**

Students should sit 6 feet apart as stated in the CDC guidelines: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

> 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.

Students should wear face coverings as stated in the CDC guidelines: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

> **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
> - Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not

surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.

EFFECTIVENESS OF FACEMASKS

HTTPS://WWW.FAU.EDU/NEWSDESK/ARTICLES/EFFICACY-FACEMASKS-CORONAVIRUS.PHP

http://bit.ly/IBsabers



Thank you,

Ms. Jo-Hannah Liz Valdez

MA in Mathematics Education

IB Coordinator & Mathematics Teacher

P: (808) 305-3635
E: jo-hannah_liz.valdez@campbell.k12.hi.us

Academy of Business, Agricultural Sciences, and International Baccalaureate (ABAIB)

James Campbell High School
91-980 North Road
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

Need tutoring? Book an appointment here:
https://valdezmath.youcanbook.me/

Testimony

Mary Ryan <mary.ryan@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. My name is Mary Ryan and I teach 3-5 Special Education at Ala Wai Elementary. 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 want to start by saying I know we are working in unprecedented times, and I understand that difficult decisions must be made. That being said, I hope you strongly consider the views of the teachers doing this frontline work and make careful decisions that are in the best interest of us and our students.

My first concern is the decision that students need only be separated by 3 feet in the classroom, instead of the CDC recommended guidelines of 6 feet. This seems like a blatant disregard for national health and safety guidelines. I do not understand why there is a social distancing guideline exception for children in school. Furthermore, it is unrealistic to expect any child to follow a social distancing guideline of ANY distance, but especially children with special needs. Many of my students require close physical proximity in order to function in the day to day school setting. I have students that elope, spit, drool, and are toileted. There is no real possible way to do what is required daily for my students and maintain a safe distance or ensure that my students are maintaining a safe distance from each other.

Secondly, I have concerns with the PPE requirement. Again, many of my students have sensory issues and will refuse a face covering or a shield strapped to their heads. Even if it were possible to get them in masks, so much of my instruction involves students being able to see my mouth move and form and hear sound clearly. My students that are nonverbal are working on speaking skills that are just not realistic while wearing a protective face covering. In addition, August and September temperatures get up to one hundred degrees in our classrooms at times making a regular school day unbearable. If you add a mask it just furthers the discomfort and creates an environment unfit for learning.

With the current rise in cases and continued uncertainty I do not feel it is safe for students or teachers to return to school at this time. Of course I understand the difficulties and concerns of a distance learning plan, however, it is naïve to believe teachers and students can effectively teach and learn in these social distancing conditions. It is irresponsible and puts so many at risk. If we must return, I strongly believe in following the CDC guidelines of 6 foot distance to promote safety for all. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

Mary Ryan

Ala Wai Elementary School

Special Education Teacher

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

Testimony

Wendy uyeda <wuyeda@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To: Members of the BOE

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for re-opening schools for the '20-'21 school year.

As an educator who has been teaching for the past 33 years, I am livid and disappointed that so little care is being given to the health, safety, and well being of Hawai'i's keiki and teachers.
Please do the right thing by honoring the contractual agreement to have classrooms configured with 6 feet between student desks and require the use of masks for everyone in the school setting.

OUR LIVES MATTER!

Wendy Uyeda
Lehua Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony: The mask policy is unacceptable

Danielle Steger <dmsteger@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher with a compromised immune system I have only left my house for necessities since schools closed in March. I have not interacted unnecessarily with others, I have not gotten together with friends and family in a "safe and socially distanced" way as I cannot take the risk, and I will not not go out without a mask on. When at a grocery store I leave the area if I see an individual wearing a mask improperly with the mask only covering their mouth. I have done everything that I can to keep myself as safe as possible. Clearly I was foolish when I believed that the Board of Education would protect me, my coworkers and my students. This spring Superintendent Kishimoto stated that we wouldn't return to school until it was safe to do so. She said that we would need to see no new cases for two weeks. We are currently seeing unprecedented daily diagnostic numbers of individuals diagnosed with Covid-19. Today alone there were 41 new cases. The governor has made it mandatory to wear masks anytime a person enters any public establishment in the State of Hawaii. Yet the Department of Education is now saying that we should all go back to work and that masks do not need to be worn in the classroom because if there are individuals with Covid-19, the disease will only spread within that "bubble." Meaning "only" to the students and teacher(s) in that class. This is unacceptable.

I work in an elementary school with students in a low socioeconomic area. Many individuals live together in extended family homes. Some of our families are houseless. Each day that our children gather without masks we are all at risk. In a July 2, 2020 NPR interview with Mary Louise Kelly of NPR's All Things Considered, , Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infections Diseases and a lead member of the White House Coronavirus task force stated that, "we have such a high percentage of people who are asymptomatic and who we know can spread the infection… We have people who may not even know they're infected and are inadvertently infecting others. Those are the ones that we want to have masks on. And we know we can protect the others who are on the other side of that mask."

In the New York Times article, "New Studies Add to Evidence That Children May Transmit the Coronavirus," the article explored the role of children in the pandemic. The article stated, "Among the most important unanswered questions about Covid-19 is this: What role do children play in keeping the pandemic going? Fewer children seem to get infected by the coronavirus than adults, and most of those who do have mild symptoms, if any. But do they pass the virus on to adults and continue the chain of transmission?" In response to this the article looked at two studies. The article goes on noting, "In one study, published last week in the journal Science, a team analyzed data from two cities in China — Wuhan, where the virus first emerged, and Shanghai — and found that children were about a third as susceptible to coronavirus infection as adults were. But when schools were open, they found, children had about three times as many contacts as adults, and three times as many opportunities to become infected, essentially evening out their risk." The article cited a second study. "The second study, by a group of German researchers, was more straightforward. The team tested children and adults and found that children who test positive harbor just as much virus as adults do — sometimes more — and so, presumably, are just as infectious."

I was terrified at the thought of returning to the classroom even before I heard the absurd guidelines. Never in a million years did I think that we would be expected to work with students without masks. In the "Hawaii State Department of Health: Schools and COVID-19" webinar, Dr. Sarah Park stated that, "We definitely do not want our kids to grow up and be frightened of what we touch or what we're exposed to." I would rather they get the opportunity to grow up. This disease can and will spread. Nobody contests that. Not even Dr. Park. You are saying that because the spread will happen in smaller "bubbles" the risk is negligible. Would it be negligible if you were the ones taking the risk? Would it be negligible if it were your unmasked child in a class with an asymptomatic classmate? We need to make masks mandatory in the classroom unless the child has a documented medical reason why they cannot wear a mask.

Dr. Park stated that wearing a mask is a "safe practice." Why then is it optional? Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience that can reduce the risk of a catastrophic event for an individual or family. That is why we wear them in public. That is why it is mandated that we wear them in public. That is why 18 states as of last week have mandated that masks be worn in public. Dr. Park speaks at length about symptoms of Coronavirus but what about those that are asymptomatic? Unless we all wear masks the disease can spread far more easily.

-Danielle Steger
--
The best things in life aren't things.
-anon

Gmail

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

I am concerned!

Alice YYK <alicepstudents@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:57 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a mother of a 2nd grader. I want my son to go back to school. but to put my child in a non-safe environment is ridiculous. We are constantly reminded of 6 foot distancing, washing our hands, and wearing our masks, everyday with signs, commercials, and ads. Yet I heard there have this ridiculous option for school, to put our children forward, with a 3 feet circumference around each child. I hope all schools will do 6 food distancing, not 3 feet. Please consider all the parents feeling!

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kayla Romero <karomero1103@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am Eduardo Romero. My children are attending high school in Campbell High, Ewa Beach Hawai'i.

I am, along with my family are very concerned about the ongoing pandemic. Opening the school for the coming school year brings a lot of concern. DOE should insure the safety of all students, school employees, and teachers in school. Wearing PPE, washing hands, and social distancing must be enforced at all times while in school and during school activities. I hope DOE will endorse all safety precautions and measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you very much for reading my email.

Very respectfully, Eduardo Romero

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Adria Noguchi <adriat716@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

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 Adria Noguchi, and I am speaking as a second-grade teacher for over twenty years at Salt Lake Elementary School. Salt Lake Elementary is a Title I school, which means we have a high percentage of children from low-income families. I do not have children, so I take seriously the fact that I am responsible for the education, safety, and health of other people's children while I am in school.

I'm extremely worried and concerned about masks being optional, visual health checks instead of temperature checks, and three feet of distance instead of six feet of physical distance between students.

Mayor Caldwell gave the mandate on July 2, 2020, Order 5: Non-Medical Grade Face Coverings, stating "All individuals within the City shall wear face coverings while outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of six (6) feet from persons who are not members of the same household or residence is not feasible." In Wu, N. (2020, July 6). 'Mayor Kirk Caldwell expands Oahu's face mask requirements.' *StarAdvertiser.* Available at: https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/07/03/hawaii-news/mayor-expands-oahus-face-mask-requirements/ (Accessed: 6 June 2020). This article states, "Mayor Kirk Caldwell on Thursday announced a new face mask mandate for all indoor public spaces as well as outdoors when physical distancing is difficult to maintain."

Amendments to this mandate now include wearing face masks indoors. It is enforceable with a possible consequence of a police warning or fine for not complying. This reinforces the importance of mask-wearing to protect others and an individual from spreading or acquiring COVID-19.

The MOU states, "Each school and worksite will have a written procedure for health check screening of employees, students, and campus visitors;" (line 48-49). This procedure should include administering daily temperature checks. Providing all teachers with non-contact thermometers to conduct these temperature checks on students upon arrival would be a positive precautionary measure. In my experience, students do not always present as ill with obvious signs such as a flushed face, coughing, runny nose, or other symptoms. I have sent students to the health room because I noticed a change in demeanor rather than observing apparent signs of illness. Often, the student had a fever, as evidenced by a temperature check, and was subsequently sent home. As a teacher, a visual assessment is only one part of data collection and should not be intended as the sole determinant. A temperature check would provide more accurate information to determine the health of a student.

As a teacher, I am not confident that three feet of distance provides enough space between children to keep a safe distance. This past school year, I had twenty-four students. Due to the nature of children this age, it is difficult to keep them from turning to speak with their classmates, touching each other, or moving about the classroom. If the CDC recommends six feet of distance from others in public and when attending events and gatherings, why is it not being required in our schools and classrooms?

It will be extremely challenging, not to mention developmentally inappropriate, for students to stay seated for an extended period. Students will need detailed instructions and reinforcement to be aware and practice safe physical distancing procedures. The amount of time and instruction that will need to be used to enforce safe physical distancing in the classroom and outdoors will take away valuable instruction time. However, this instruction and time given to physical distancing procedures are vital to keeping our children safe and healthy.

I'm sure you can understand my fear and worry that one of my students may become ill with COVID-19 and spread this virus to their families. Many of my students live in homes with their extended family, and often, they live in smaller homes where it is difficult to distance physically. I'm imploring our leaders to prioritize safety for all with mandatory mask-wearing, daily temperature checks, and physical distancing of at least six feet. We owe it to our students and families that we serve to keep them safe when they return to school. We cannot put them or their families at risk with unsafe procedures. Please make responsible decisions for the safety and health of our students and their families. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Adria Noguchi

Grade 2 teacher
Salt Lake Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

Suzanne Goodrich <suzanne.goodrich@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education:

I would like to submit testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Suzanne Goodrich and I am speaking as both a Central District special educator at Radford High School and a parent to a 4th grader at Mililani Waena Elementary. As a teacher, I have concerns about the spread of Covid-19 among asymptomatic carriers if schools are only going to require 3 feet of distance be maintained between students. If universities are adhering to the CDC's recommended 6 feet of distancing for adult students, it seems illogical for only 3 feet of distancing to be required for public school children who will be interacting for several hours daily in classrooms which do not have the best ventilation. It is also concerning that protective face masks will be **optional** when emerging research suggests that transmission of viral aerosols occurs most when conversing and interacting with others indoors for extended periods of time.

I understand that on-campus learning is what is most beneficial for students, but I feel that safe social distancing on campus is going to be extremely challenging. Although I might be able to maintain adequate space between my special education students due to my class sizes tending to be smaller, I feel it will be challenging to maintain safe social distance among the bigger general education classes, and to not make face coverings mandatory feels very risky. Unfortunately, my classroom at Radford is without a sink; in previous years, we relied on hand-sanitizer and hand wipes in order to disinfect our hands and shared surfaces. Right now it is very hard to secure hand-sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, and I feel the island's shortage of these items will further compound the dangers associated with teachers and students spreading germs when we return to campus. I feel that your safety plan should also include the precaution of equipping teachers with thermometers so that temperature checks can be conducted on students upon arrival to class since visual assessments alone would not be adequate. As a parent of a talkative 9 year old girl, I am extremely concerned about my elementary schooler's ability and her peers' diligence with wearing face masks and adhering to the 3 feet of distancing in order to keep keiki safe when in the classroom and enjoying unstructured time on campus.

My 42 year old diabetic husband has the luxury of doing remote architectural design work for a mainland company from the comfort of our rented townhome -- which has helped limit his potential exposure to the coronavirus thus far. If schools reopen according to the current plan, despite double-digit new cases of Covid-19 being reported, I am worried that either our daughter or I could transmit the virus to him which could seriously compromise his immune system. Unfortunately, we do not have extended family on Oahu that we can turn to for help if one of us falls ill with the virus. As our leaders, I implore you to make safety the number one priority when moving forward with your planning for the upcoming school year amid this global pandemic.

Mahalo for taking the time to consider my personal input and concerns,
Suzanne Goodrich, M. Ed

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Gmail

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

Please help teachers to help students

Jennifer <jenn_ota@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:59 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE members,
There is nothing more that I want this Fall than to go back to in face to face teaching with my students. However, I am scared of being infected by the corona virus and then bringing it home to my family, I have a little baby boy and the thought of him getting sick and having to be hospitalized ALONE keeps me up at night. Can you imagine that?!?! I know you've heard this a million times so I thank you for reading this...yet another teacher pleading with you all for some changes.

Please stand up for us by requiring all students to wear masks (which is something already set in place by the mayor) and pls require 6 feet distancing in the classroom. Even with these things in place it will be scary but that's what teacher do, we make sacrifices for our students bc we know that it's best for them to learn face to face.

Please please put yourself in our shoes, in the classroom each day, out there exposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Ota
Teacher, ELL
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Safe schools

Jacky Jaeger <jaegerj001@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:59 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE Members,
As an elementary school teacher in the DOE, I am anxious to get back to teaching our Keiki. It was always my understanding that my priority as an educator is to promote a safe learning environment.
It has been stressed by our local leaders in both government and the health department that two of the safety “musts” for face to face meetings such as classroom instruction are wearing face masks and social distancing by staying at least 6 feet part. I trust you will not jeopardize the health and safety of our Keiki, staff, and teachers by skirting around these very important safeguards. Please mandate face masks and 6 foot distancing of student desks/seating.
Thank you for your consideration in this important matter.
-Jacquelyn Jaeger

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Start of school

Laurie Marks <kiakonal001@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:03 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

How can the superintendent say students and teachers are not required to wear mask in class when the mayor said its mandatory to wear mask? Is she not thinking! Have her go into the classroom with kids with no mask! Hello sister you not thinking about your employees. So the school staff gets sick is she and admin gonna teach and help the kids? You getting the big bucks so come up with another way that school can start up!

--Laurie Marks

Gmail

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

Safe distancing

Larry Junsay <larryjunsay@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:04 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Having acquired asthma several years ago it is imperative I avoid close contact with people who may carry the Covid19 virus. Six feet distancing, as recommended by medical experts, is important for my safety.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Brittney Pavao-Adaro <bpavao@holomuael.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Brittney Pavao-Adaro and I am a 4th Grade Teacher at Holomua Elementary in Ewa Beach.

I am writing this email in regards to the contractual agreement that our classrooms would be configured with the state recommended six feet distance (between student desks). Three feet is unacceptable and would be unsafe for both students and teachers. 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.

Thank you

-Brittney

Gmail

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

6feet instead of 3feet

Jenny Xu <jennyxuliang@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:07 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a mother of a 3rd grader and kindergardener. I want my kids to go back to school. but to put my child in a non-safe environment is ridiculous.

We are constantly reminded of 6 foot distancing, washing our hands, and wearing our masks, everyday with signs, commercials, and ads.

Yet I heard there have this ridiculous option for school, to put our children forward, with a 3 feet circumference around each child. I hope all schools will do 6 food distancing, not 3 feet.

If there is no sufficient resources, I don't mind my kids staying home half of the week and go school half of the week.

Jenny

Gmail

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

School Reopening

Thea Shapiro <tshapiro@haaspcs.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:08 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a high school teacher and I urge the BOE to follow all CDC guidelines for reducing the spread of COVID by making masks inside the classroom and outside the classroom on school campuses mandatory and spacing students 6 feet apart in classrooms. If stores require people to be six feet apart and to wear masks then why wouldn't schools?
Mahalo for your time,
Thea Shapiro

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Georgia Nina Blas <georgia.blas@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:09 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE Members,

My name is Georgia Blas, and currently a teacher at Kai'ulani Elementary and a parent for two children that attend University Laboratory School nd Nu'uanu 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 strongly disagree with the guideline of reopening schools using only 3 feet of social distancing among students and teachers. This 3 feet social distancing in the classrooms is truly disgusting that the State is allowing the safety of both teachers and students to be at risk when the CDC guidelines clearly state that social distancing should be at least 6 feet. Teachers are human beings with feelings and allowing 3 feet truly hurts the morale and pride of the people who are educating our future leaders. I hope you can find it in your hearts to see how allowing 3 feet social distancing in the classrooms will hurt the children and teachers, and see how unsafe it is for everyone involved. As a parent, I feel unsafe having my children attend school with only a 3 feet guideline when everywhere else is saying to use 6 feet social distancing!

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Georgia Blas

Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony

Emilio Macalalad <egmacalalad@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I teach at Molokai High School. If you didn't already know that is the only high school on the island. The two cases that we had on island caused everyone to panic because of the limited number of resources that are readily available to us. When they shut down one of our three main grocery stores on the island, everyone was concerned. There were long lines at Kualapu'u Market and it was close to impossible to call in orders to Misaki's. In addition, this shut down our grab and go meals from the high school until it was clear to start up again.

In my opinion, HSTA and DOE did not reach an agreement with the MOU. They could not agree on the safe distance of 3 feet or 6 feet. Now I'm hearing it's 10 to 12 feet. Plus the numbers are climbing and Ige is not changing his stance on reopening trans-Atlantic travel on August 1. This will just perpetuate the climb in numbers. Hawai'i cannot afford to jeopardize students, teachers, and school staff lives when no one can seem to be on the same page. There is still too much uncertainty about this virus.

We were told during distance learning that school would not resume unless we saw zero cases in the islands for a period of time. We were seeing that at a time, but numbers are climbing as we opened up establishments and businesses. As we approach the opening of school, we are also going to see numbers rise. How can we say it's safe to go back?

I have much aloha for my island of Molokai. I love teaching science now more than ever! I love my haumāna and want to see them healthy and safe! It's not worth the risk! We can do the distance learning much better now,. We have had months to plan and prepare.

Emilio Macalalad
Science Teacher
Molokai High School

Gmail

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

Why is Hawaii DOE risking teacher and student lives?

Melanie Nagatori <melanie.nagatori@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:09 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education:

I have been a teacher for 27 years in the state of Hawaii.

I am disappointed and upset at what the Hawaii DOE is proposing and NOT requiring for the safety and health of teachers and students, as we plan to return to school this July 2020.

The only reason that Hawaii has done so well during this pandemic compared to other states, is because of our willingness to think of others, and follow the protocol that the governor has instituted. Therefore, I am very shocked that the Hawaii DOE is
agreeing to 3 feet of social distancing instead of 6 feet, and that masks are NOT mandatory for all students. This does not follow what our governor has required, which has kept the COVID numbers down in Hawaii.

I feel totally unsafe about going back to school...especially without the minimum of 6 feet social distancing and required masks. Why is the health and lives of teachers and students being risked by NOT following the protocol set by the governor?

I do not want to see teacher and student lives lost. Please help us.

Respectfully yours,
M. Nagatori

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

Testimony

Amie Yanuaria <yanuariaamie@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:10 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 Amie Yanuaria. I work at Waimalu Elementary School.

Thanks!

Gmail

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

6 Feet Distancing

Joanne Acoba <jacoba@waimeahs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:10 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Teachers in Hawaii are very much underpaid for day to day sacrifices we make everyday in our classroom for our students. During every normal school year, our job is endless, many times sacrificing our weekends and precious family time to make sure our students receive the high quality education they deserve! Teachers in Hawaii teach out of love, bviously not for the money!!! PLEASE!!!! WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR A RAISE! IN FACT WE ARE PROBABLY LOOKING AT FUTURE PAY CUTS AND/OR FURLOUGHS!! ALL WE ARE ASKING IS TO PLEASE ALLOW AND RESPECT THE 6 FEET SOCIAL DISTANCING CDC REQUIRES ESPECIALLY IN THE CLASSROOM!!! WE ARE ASKING TO RESPECT THIS 6 FEET (NOT 3 FEET) SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENT TO HELP PROTECT OUR STUDENTS AND US TEACHERS AND SO TEACHERS MAY TRY TO AVOID GOING ON SICK LEAVE FOR TO TESTING POSITIVE!!!

Sincerely yours,
Joanne Acoba
Waimea High School
Math Teacher

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Fwd: Testimony

Mary Hackney <maryh1955@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

From: Mary Hackney <maryh1955@gmail.com>
Date: July 7, 2020 at 6:51:36 PM HST
To: testimony.BOE@hawaii.gov
Cc: Hackney Mary <maryh1955@gmail.com>
Subject: Testimony

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on the issue of public schools reopening. My name is Mary Hackney, retired RN. I am submitting testimony against the 3 foot distancing. Anything less than CDC guidelines (6 feet minimum) is unacceptable. I believe this is on Discussion Item VI(A).
COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. It is spread in the air. Now that businesses are reopening and more and more visitors are arriving, we are seeing the predicted results, an increase in cases of COVID-19.
Hawai'i has the best record so far. But, lack of leadership is steering us in the wrong direction. Don't reopen schools because the President is pressuring States. For the same reasons I refuse to eat in a restaurant, if I was a parent, I would refuse to send my child into an unsafe environment. In my profession we call that child endangerment and we are required to notify CPS.
The bottom line as I see it, we do not have control of this virus. There must be mass testing so that know carriers will be quarantined. Identification of people who have had contact with those know to be infected must also be quarantined. When possible, use ZOOM for safe schooling. For classes that ZOOM is not practical, keep classes at a maximum of 10 students, desks 6 feet apart at a minimum, mandatory masks, optional eye shields, and hand sanitizer. Conduct classes outside when possible with same safety recommendations. Every public health expert says the same recommendations. Listen to them, not Capitalists who buy our politicians!
Sincerely,
Mary Hackney, BSN, RN, CNOR-e

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

When DOE returns live

Chris Nakagawa <cnaks65@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:15 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern. I am disappointed with Ms Kishimoto's current policy of students do NOT have to wear a mask & 3 feet instead of 6 feet distancing. It is a complete disregard for the health and safety for both staff and students. Please be more supportive of those in the front lines.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Kitashiro <michelleytyin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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

My name is Michelle Kitashiro and I am a proud parent of a 10-month-old miracle who is considered immune-compromised. We have many friends and family that are teachers, and when I learned about the plan to re-open the schools, I became very worried about everyone's health.

It is unsafe for teachers and students to be only 3 feet apart. They should be at least 6 ft apart and abide by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. If you are changing the school schedule, why can't you also change the 6ft rule? There are over 150,000 students and more than 11,000 teachers...if you do not distance the students and staff, they have a greater/faster chance of becoming clusters of COVID-19 within the different schools. Not only are the students/staff at risk, but they also pose the risk of bringing COVID-19 to their families. Which we know there are multi-family homes that pose risk to Keiki to Kupuna. Teachers seeing their students every day already puts them at higher risk of infection, especially, with no given personal protective equipment.

Please take this testimony to heart. People's health and safety are the most important, and as our state's cases are increasing, we should be thinking of how we can keep our locals safe. Thank you.

Aloha,
Michelle Kitashiro

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cherie <lash.cher@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I would like to voice my opposition to the 3 foot apart proposition. Just today I saw a long news clip about a new study showing that even at 6 feet apart there is still quite a bit of particulate droplet dispersion. I think it is crucial that we hold fast to the 6 feet recommendation that all businesses, the CDC and public gatherings have mandated and with this in mind wonder why it is even considered to do otherwise. Also, as students, teachers and staff get sick, how will we handle the spread? And who will be willing to be the substitute teachers? What about our medically fragile/at risk students? Will they get special provisions? And if so, how will that be determined?
Let's get back to school, but let's do it with safety and common sense first.

Mahalo,
Teacher from the Windward Side

Gmail

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

Testimony

Katrina Haddin <beckhamk@khswaverider.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:17 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a high school teacher on the Big Island and strongly object to the 3ft distancing instead of 6feet. This is a violation of my human rights and could cost us 20% of our vulnerable teachers if they decide to quit due to not having safe enough circumstances. I believe a bubble mentality could work for elementary schools and that being able to see the teachers mouth is vital but for middle school and high school there is so much movement that we have to have 6ft between desks. My husband has diabetes as does my mother in law...my dad has severe immune deficiencies...if we are wreckless...if the three schools my three kids go to are wreckless, then I'll be out caring for possible covid related kids or myself...if my husband got it we'd loose that income and he could die-I couldn't survive here without him working...we would have to leave Hawaii...I think the DOE should provide face shields for middle and high school students, require this but not masks so they can breath, they should require 6ft space between wiggly kids AND teens as well as masks when "not" in a bubble...figure it out...have leaders lead by example by cutting their own pay not ours...we will loose many more teachers if our pay gets cut

Gmail

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

3 feet unrealistic in elementary!!

Kehau Ching <kehaucellphone@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:18 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I believe that 3 feet apart is impractical for elementary students. Imagine, the facts are they lack in social skills, are attention seeking and naturally playful. If they are not structured by simple expectations at home they will and do have a hard time
Doing it elsewhere (especially in schools).
If the classes are 6- max 10 it can be doable but any larger their attention span will be out the door. I believe that 4-6 could adjust but k-3 may be a gamble. Like some schools in Florida they have lessen the student count by some parents choosing to homeschool and online Teaching, that cut classes to 6-8 students at a time. They have sufficient space and agreement with school and parents need to be communicated and agreed effectively upon for this to work. There need to be signed agreements and we as teachers need to be supported by admin. There is a lack already in competent Leadership, I cannot imagine how it will be with even more pressure to all parties involved. We can come to an agreement with all collaborating parties involved to create solutions but not just with our clueless politicians making unrealistic demands. Reality is that not everyone will be happy, that's their personal struggle but logical, safe, reasonable agreements need to be made with all health safety precautions being primary. God bless and good luck, I hope this was not taken as a gripe session but a cheer in the right direction.
I love to help and support reasonably and with no power tripping attitude like most have. I pray that everyone will have an open Heart and mind Thursday and we can all come up with clear resolutions!! That way we can begin fresh regardless with the adversities we just need move forward!! New beginnings are constant together we can do this!!!

Mahalo So much for all of your efforts!!

Kehau

Gmail

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

Face masks

Nadine Izu <dinieezzoo@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:19 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have heard that face masks will be optional for the upcoming school year. Is it just me or does anyone else think this is absolutely absurd. The most simple thing that we can do is make it mandatory for students to wear masks. It will keep everyone safe and empower students to be part of keeping our community safe and getting us back to some semblance of normal. You are the leadership, please do what we all know is the right thing. Sometimes we just got to what's right and not care about what's popular. You have to be the adult in this case and not their friend. Please keep our children and community safe while educating students.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

(no subject)

David OuYang <davidouyang168@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:24 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a mother of a 1st grader & 4th grader . I want my kids to go back to school. but to put my child in a non-safe environment is ridiculous. We are constantly reminded of 6 foot distancing, washing our hands, and wearing our masks, everyday with signs, commercials, and ads. Yet I heard there have this ridiculous option for school, to put our children forward, with a 3 feet circumference around each child. I hope all schools will do 6 feet distancing, not 3 feet.

发自我的iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Alona Dinio <alonad808@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Members of the Board:

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 Alona Dinio and I am a concerned community member. My spouse is a teacher in the Leeward district on Oahu and I am extremely disappointed with the guidance provided in the HIDOE's "Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan". There are definite contradictions with the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) guidance. For example, HIDOE guidance fails to follow the most exposed and reiterated CDC recommendation of "to practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm's length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces", taken directly from their website.The CDC is the national public health institute in the United States. It is the nation's health protection agency and so shouldn't we be listening to these health experts about how to deal with the pandemic? The CDC guidance aims to help students, teachers, admin, and staff to take precautions to minimize the spread of the virus. Our coronavirus numbers are already on the rise in Hawaii and is definitely spreading in our communities. The current HIDOE guidance will undoubtedly further the coronavirus spread within our community. Science and common sense works.

Furthermore, HIDOE had already agreed to and signed off on issuing the 6 foot distance guideline and requiring masks within the classrooms. It's unacceptable that HIDOE is not holding up their end and is risking the health, safety, and well-being of our community.

Mahalo for your time,
Alona Dinio

Gmail

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

Testimony

Logan Okita <lokitahsta@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:26 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Logan Okita and I teach first grade at Nimitz Elementary School. In just a few weeks I will begin my fifteenth school year. It is a milestone in my career and I am sure it will be memorable. I want it to be memorable for the right reasons: the excitement on my students' faces as we learn new things, integrating even more technology into my teaching practices, and collaborating with my colleagues as we adjust our teaching. I do not want it to be memorable because someone at my school becomes infected with COVID-19.

HSTA and HIDOE agreed to specific language during negotiations that will help to protect my students and colleagues. Despite the specificity of the language, not all of our schools are following the Memorandum of Understanding because administrators are being given other guidance. The administrators at my school are following the physical distancing guidance to keep students separated by six feet, but teachers at other schools are being told that three feet is enough. Three feet is not enough space to keep our students from spreading the virus between classmates or teachers. Students will not sit facing forward in their seats for long periods of time so we should not create physical distancing guidelines based on that expectation. When I wait in line at the grocery store I have to stay six feet away from others and wear a mask yet we are being told that students can be three feet away and not wear a mask indoors.

It has been argued that the concept of an "ohana bubble" will keep the virus contained to the group and make tracing easier. But I believe that a classroom's ohana bubble will also contain each individual's bubble from outside of school and I cannot control who my students interact with when they go home. I have kept my own ohana bubble to a minimum since March in order to protect my 97-year-old grandmother who I help to care for. This has even meant limiting visits by her children and grandchildren. When we return to school, I will need to change my interactions with her and limit the amount of care that I provide for her in order to keep her safe.

Please help teachers to protect our students, their families, our families, and the community by asking HIDOE to follow the agreements made in the Memorandum of Understanding and clearly communicating the guidance to administrators and teachers.

Sincerely,
Logan Okita, MEd, NBCT

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 2020-2021 School Year.

claire hori <bubbie.hori@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

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 am a teacher and have been teaching for 30 years. I love my job and know that the most effective way to teach the children is to have face to face every day contact with them. I experienced using distance learning this past year and enjoyed seeing the students thrive despite the difficult circumstances. They were very enthusiastic and came prepared for every lesson and were great listeners for first graders, however, I know that distance learning is an inferior substitute for in-class interaction.

While I'd like to see in-class learning happen this coming school year, my greatest concern is that we protect our keiki's health. Each year I have several students with asthma or other health issues. At their young age they are prone to catching colds and flus in the classroom; when one student becomes sick a fourth or more of my class also become ill and stays out of school in the following days. Additionally, I am an at-risk teacher with health issues and am concerned with the direction that the superintendent is taking.

We teachers have a passion for educating our students and will do the very best that we can to ensure that they are provided the best opportunity for learning whatever the circumstances. Given the current state of the pandemic in Hawaii, I feel that the 6 foot rule enforcement is the safest way to keep as many of us as possible to be safe and healthy and able to continuously remain in school. The CDC and DOH are mandating this strategy, so why would 3 feet be acceptable in Hawaii's classrooms?

Thank you in advance for your support and prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully,
Claire Horiuchi
Kapalama Grade 1 Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nathan Waters <nathan.waters@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:28 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**.

I agree with the CDC recommendation that indoors people should stay at leased 6 ft away from each other. Schools should follow this recommendation and space students 6ft apart in the classroom. If it is not a requirement that students wear masks the least we can do is keep them spaced as far a possible.

Thank you for your time,

Nathan Waters
Teacher, Waiakea High
Math Department

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Joyce Schaunaman <joyceschaunaman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:28 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To: Board of Education
State of Hawai'i

Re: Discussion for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

I am writing to request that the BOE adopt the CDC recommendation that schools "space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible" to reduce risk. I am a teacher at an intermediate school on Maui and I expect my school to follow this recommended practice to keep my students safe and protected from the COVID 19. I am very concerned about keeping students and staff safe so that everyone can focus on learning.

I appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Mahalo nui loa,
Joyce Schaunaman
'Iao Intermediate School Teacher
260 Market Street
Wailuku, Maui 96793

Gmail

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

Safely returning

Keri Nakamura <knakamura05@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:29 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it concerns,
I am a special education prek teacher and I'm concerned about returning to work. I do not agree with the 3 ft social distancing. It should be at minimum 6 ft. I also feel that temperature checks before entering the classroom should be mandatory.

Prior to Covid, parents constantly send their kids to school sick. Even more so, I'm worried about contracting the virus and bringing it home to my 11 month old daughter and family. I also live with very high risk people.

I understand that special education students will have priority to returning to campus, but it needs to be done the right way and in a safe manner for everyone!!! Being a prek special education teacher, I'm very worried about returning because of how hands on we need to be with our students. I've gotten coughed and sneezed on in the face. Some student don't have the self help skills to wash their hands or use the toilet. It's important for the schools to enforce the if you have symptoms then to stay home. Even if there's no fever.

I understand that not all students will be able to fit in the cafeteria, and teachers should be allotted their duty free lunch.

I've also heard "rumors" that some teachers have been asked to open their doors earlier to accommodate social distancing. Teachers should not have to due to their contract.

I hope the BOE understands and considers ALL voices. they need to realize how it truly is to be in a classroom. I understand that education is important but the health of myself and my family is more important during this crisis.

Warmest regards,
KN

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Debi Schmeding <debischmeding@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:30 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
I am a secondary school teacher at a school in Kaneohe. I am
writing to you with my concerns about the DOE's current plan for the reopening of schools. Contrary to CDC guidelines and in disregard of the MOU with HSTA it seems that 6 feet of distance between students is not being mandated by the DOE nor is the wearing of masks. This even though 6 feet of distance is urged for ALL and Mayor Caldwell has said masks are now MANDATED on the island of Oahu.
I urge you to strengthen the protections for our keiki, educators and all staff members at schools across the state. If schools reopen with little to no protections, as is being proposed it is a given that we will be shut down again in a very short time.

Deborah Schmeding
335 Manae St
Kailua 96734

Sent from my iPad

Testimony

Lisa Kaneko <kanekol@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lisa Kaneko and I work 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.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools space seating six feet apart, which is incongruent with the plan to allow students to be three feet apart in classrooms. In addition, the exemption for mask wearing for educational settings, as stipulated in the most recent emergency order on July 2, 2020, is equally troubling. I am deeply concerned about the health and safety of the students and families that I serve, as well as that of my fellow educators. I myself have been identified as having a preexisting condition that puts me in a high-risk category and have family members who are very susceptible to infection. The plan to reopen for the school year 2020-2021 must be reconsidered.

With the recent influx in infection rate, I feel that it is imperative that current reopening plans be revisited, and consider an option that emphasizes more social distancing, preventative measures that the CDC outlines and preventing students from coming to campus as much as possible, thus keeping the wellbeing and safety of our communities of paramount importance. We should focus our efforts on trying to build a plan that will support a distance learning environment for all of our students at this time, due to the unpredictable nature of this pandemic.

I care deeply for the future of each of our students, as well as my fellow educators. We must remember that the health and safety of every stakeholder in our community is paramount if we want to prioritize and emphasize education.

Best regards,
Lisa Kaneko, Ed.D.

July 7, 2020

Good morning,

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 Julene Tanimoto, and I am a science teacher at Aiea High School.

After the Center of Disease Control issued guidelines of keeping 6-feet distances between people and wearing masks where social distancing is not possible, I am concerned that the Department of Education is allowing schools to place student desks 3 feet apart from each other and relaxing the mask recommendations issued by the CDC. Research has shown that the virus responsible for causing Covid-19 can stay in the air for hours, so relaxing mask rules seems absurd in a classroom where a teacher and their students stay together for 70 minutes or more during a period.

If masks are optional for everyone in the classroom, people would take off their masks and anyone infected with Covid-19 would be able to expose everyone in the room while they are present in class. Although the teachers may talk and explain concepts to students, every student in class asks questions, helps their classmates, or participates in discussion. Governor David Ige and Mayor Kirk Caldwell also issued mandates that masks are to be worn in all essential businesses and public spaces where social distancing is not possible. How can the DOE relax mask rules that were already issued by state and city and county order? Studies have also shown that wearing masks reduced the spread of the virus in crowded areas like New York, Japan, and Wuhan. This one simple detail saved many people from getting the virus and prevented hospitalizations and possible deaths.

In regards to the 3-feet spacing of desks, how does anyone expect a class of high school students to face forward for all 70 minutes of class? It is natural for students to turn around to talk to their neighbors during work time, ask questions of their peers and teachers, and walk around class to discuss work with a peer across the room. It is actually unhealthy to stay seated without moving for long periods of time. Covid-19 spreads easily when a group of people is kept in an enclosed space, and having a 3-feet separation between desks would expose students and their teachers more readily. Other businesses require 6 feet between employees and customers, so why do teachers and students have to have half the recommended distance in classrooms?

Having more space allows for people to be more cautious of their surroundings and reduces the transmission of the virus. Having only 3 feet of space between desks puts everyone at risk. The point of creating a safe reopening plan was to keep the schools open and get students back to school and teachers back to work. Please understand that placing teachers in hazardous working conditions not only affects their health but the health of their families as well. Should teachers get ill and have to take time off to recover, students will fall further behind in their studies. Reopening schools safely is something we are all responsible for, and teachers should not be made to feel they are risking their lives everyday as they teach.

Sincerely,
Julene Tanimoto

Gmail

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

Testimony

Adi Ell-Ad <adiwood@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Testifying on Discussion Item VI(A):

I support mandating masks and maintaining 6 foot social distancing at school. These are the only tools we currently have to help with well being and try to prevent the pandemic from spreading.

With Aloha and A hui hou
Mahalo nui loa,
Adi Ell-Ad
Cell# 808.281.1864

Newly branded website:
ADIWOOD.com
iPicturePeople.com

Latest Projects:
"Kuleana" Trailer 2017
Music Video: Jamie Gallo - Ticket

Name: Yunnuen Manrique, Parent of 2 public high school students.
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 son and daughter are public high school students. I have been a Dental Assistant with a local practitioner for more than 20 years.

Resuming face-to-face instruction in schools now is a grave mistake.

1. You are planning to reopen schools when the risk for COVID is higher prior to the closing of schools. Community spread of COVID has been soaring throughout the US and Hawaii after the recent reopening of businesses, and public beaches and parks. In addition, many people have taken advantage of this situation by disregarding safety health practices and letting their guard down. Imagine the risks of COVID spreading rapidly in an environment where thousands of students are tightly packed in - fellow students, teachers, and staff alike are at the risk of getting infected and orders will fall back to closings of schools because of it. Public health authorities warn of a risky surge during the Fall Flu season as well.
2. My daughter has recently caught a persistent sore throat and minor symptoms of congestion (has not been tested for COVID as of now). I can only imagine how many more students who could not only be recent carriers, but weakened immune - like my daughter - from other illnesses. Especially as we consider the upcoming Flu season, the reopening of schools will lead to our children become infected, carry COVID into their own households, and continue to spread from there. Their fellow teachers and staff will eventually become carriers that will then lead to spread of COVID in their family homes. For the sake of our children and the hardworking team of their schools, you are putting the sake of returning to

typical fashioned education in desks and classrooms ***instead*** of considering the long-term effect this will have in families and communities alike.

   a. Although our children have been considered to be healthy and less likely to take tolls from COVID, there are many who are at risk with other health issues such as asthma. Not all of the students returning will be 100% healthy and fit to enter basically a welcoming site for COVID. Despite the consideration of following CDC rules for masks, do we really expect students to be sujectgated to 7-8 hours of wearing a mask which can essentially struggle with their own health terms to breathe properly? My daughter, a previous asthma patient, struggles to properly circulate her oxygen for wearing the mask a mere 2 hours. Other children such as my daughter will face the same hardship.

3. The rush to reopen schools presumes that our students *need* to be in classrooms to properly learn. However, this sounds like the contrary as teachers had to (unexpectedly) reroute their entire learning process online. In the midst of COVID, society has grasped to adapt to the media life - including schools. For students who did not have access to technologies and media, they were offered resources from their schools and internet programs. Their education is no doubt significant, yet students should not have to subjectgate their health in order to meet that expectation. Their teachers should not have to subjectgate their health in order to show up in a highly infectious environment to teach a lesson they could learn to adapt online for the comfort of everyone’s health.

Gmail

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

Reopening of schools

Karie Wong <kariewo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not let politics influence “safety” as secondary to “academics”. If a staff member or teacher tests positive for Covid the school will need to quarantine and close. So why put fuel in the fire? We need to respect and follow CDC guidelines for SAFETY FIRST!!
Thank you from a teacher at Kapolei Complex Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Ryan Towata <bigtowata@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:41 PM

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 Ryan Towata. I have been a K-6 educator in Hawaii for the past 16 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 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.

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.

Ryan Towata

Gmail

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

Testimony

CJ Ancheta <ANCHETAC003@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education

This is a 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 testifying because I care for the health and safety of all stakeholders and that includes teachers, school staff and administrators, students, parents, and the community. I am testifying because I care for you also. You have been chosen as a member of this prestigious board because you care as well and will make right decisions for our keiki. That said, “per 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. 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.”

In this regard, may I ask you to honor the contractual agreement between the DOE and HSTA and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Sincerely,

Cornelio Ancheta

Teacher, Lahainaluna High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

chriswhite914@gmail.com <chriswhite914@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I'm writing to provide testimony about Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation in Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 school year. My son will be entering his senior year at Moanalua HS. I am concerned that the three foot separation does not meet CDC guidelines. Additionally I've heard rumors that masks would not be mandatory. While I understand the difficulty of maintaining 6 ft separation I'm concerned the schools will become a breeding ground for the virus. Therefore I urge you to explore creative solutions to making sure our children's education continues safely. One possible solution is half the students attend class in person and the other half attend virtually. This could switch from week to week.

Mahalo,
Chris White

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony - Discussion VI(A)

Peggy Martin Laidlaw <peggyelaidlaw@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

RE: Discussion VI(A)

I am writing as a member of the Maui community in support of 6 foot social distancing for our schools. Nothing about this upcoming school year will be normal and unfortunately every scenario will have some challenges that will need to be overcome. Given those truths, we must choose to protect the health of our community. Kids are resilient and we can think in new ways to provide them with meaningful education.

I work with school age children as a swim coach and we are submitting plans to return to swim with distancing 6 feet or more, wearing masks when in transit on deck and disinfecting any shared equipment - and this is for OUTDOOR pools! I don't understand how thousands of children in our state can be within close proximity of others day after day without increasing the spread of SARS-COV-2.

I am 38 and appear to be healthy. What many don't know is that I have severe lung damage from untreated asthma as a teen athlete and a minor immunodeficiency. I am worried for my health daily - that means I am worried for the future of my three year old son.

The decisions you make reach far beyond the students, the faculty, the administration, the support staff... The decisions made for our state can be life and death for people like me.

Peggy Laidlaw
Waikapu, Maui, HI

Gmail

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

Testimony: 6ft distance & FACE SHIELDS

Natalia Hussey-Burdick <nataliah@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

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

Aloha Chair & members of the BOE,

Please, please rethink your decision to allow 3 ft "social distancing" in classrooms.

This is a prime opportunity to reduce class sizes and bring more learning outside! Studies show that COVID transmission risk is lower outdoors, but the #1 most important thing to do is to uphold a MINIMUM 6 ft social distancing, and wear masks!

https://khn.org/morning-breakout/yes-being-outside-lowers-risk-of-transmission-but-crowding-together-ramps-it-back-up/

The most practical PPE is actually to give each child a face shield, so their breathing & speech are not impaired and they don't miss out on facial cues. If the face shield was protective enough, that MIGHT even allow you to safely reduce social distance.

The legislature just approved funding for HIEMA to procure additional PPE for students. Please work with them to secure FACE SHIELDS for each student.

Cases are rising faster than they were back in March. Please do the right thing and comply with CDC & WHO recommendations, with a minimum of 6 feet between each student.

Natalia Hussey-Burdick
Kaneohe Resident, living with public school students (Heeia Elementary)
808-688-3481

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Brown <mbmaui@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:46 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

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

Gmail

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

Concerns about 3 ft. apart

Cheryl Reed <cheryl.reed@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:48 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a second grade teacher, a widow and a single parent to two beautiful boys who are also in elementary school. I am very concerned that if the CDC says 6ft away is the way to stay healthy when around others, then why are we ok with 3ft away? My students go home and have big family parties on the weekends. Many of them are not social distancing outside of school, and will be bringing those outside germs inside the classroom. I taught summer school this year and my students were 6ft away. Even then they liked to walk over to each other and talk. Being 6ft away gave me time to remind them of social distancing but 3ft away will be a lot harder to keep the kids at a distance. Kids are impulsive and want to be close to their friends. I understand that 3ft away can fit more students in the classroom but is squeezing more students in a room more important than the health and well being of all involved. I need to be healthy for my family and my students. I do not want to see the covid case numbers continue to rise because we make our own rules and we don't follow the CDC.

Mahalo
Cheryl Reed

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Lenalynn Miyamoto <nakatallm@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Lena Miyamoto and I am a teacher at Leilehua High School. I am here to testify against the department of educations comprehensive plan to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 school year. The reason for me being against the plan, is the statement about 3 feet distancing. I would like 6 feet distancing to take place in my classroom as well as every classroom here in Hawaii.
I am a parent of 5 children who attend different schools and since COVID 19 I have been very watchful of the thing that my children do. We have been keeping our social distance and I have been teaching my children to continuously wash hands. If COVID hits our family then it will definitely spread to our whole family (We do live in a small house) which makes me nervous since our health hasn't been the greatest.
Anyways since i have been teaching my kids how to take care of themselves during these times and have been social distancing. It makes me nervous for my kids and I to go back to school and we are even closer than the 6feet distancing.
Please help to consider our 6feet distancing instead of 3feet.
Thank you for your time
-Lena Miyamoto

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Written Testimony regarding safely reopening schools

J W <jenicakyoko@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:51 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a first grade teacher at Ala Wai Elementary School. I hope you will make the safety and health of the keiki, teachers, and all their ohana a top, non-negotiable priority. Spreading Covid-19 could needlessly endanger people. In my house alone, there are 3 vulnerable people. My mother is elderly, my children both have asthma, and one of my children also has been through heart surgery. I'm certain other teachers and students have similar situations.

Classrooms need to implement at least 6 feet distance between people and mandatory face covering.

I am concerned for the safety of my student, myself, and my own family. I implore you to require a distance of at least 6 feet between desks in classrooms. Students seated 3 feet apart will inevitably turn around. As an adult, I would struggle to face forward only during a lecture or lesson. How can we expect students to sit in a stationary position, not turning at all. I turn. I look around. I stretch my arms and neck. I turn my head and cough or sneeze into my elbow. Only a few students will remember to cover their sneezes and coughs. The rest of the class sometimes sneeze and cough into the air all year long, regardless of health lessons, activities, and reminders.

At least 6 feet between desks is needed, if not more. Unless desks are bolted down, the desks (along with the student) will move in any direction. Students drop items all the time, they will get up to retrieve it.

Lastly, all people on campus should be wearing a face covering! According to the CDC, the only **exceptions** for elementary school aged students would be if they have trouble breathing (ex. Asthma) or if they're incapacitated or unconscious.

Please keep us all safe. Social distance of 6 feet and face coverings. This should not be an option, but a must. This could save my children from getting hospitalized, it could save my student's mom from having cancer and Covid-19 simultaneously. This could save my student who, just this year, removed his trach tube from getting sick.

How much is a human life worth?

Please heed our pleads.

Sincerely,
Jenica Wadsack

Ala Wai Elementary School

Gmail

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

back to school safety concerns

alice carpenter <lucy5071queen@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

How do we enforce distancing with 6 feet apart in every direction?

How do I teach through a mask? Taco Bell drive thru can't understand me in a mask?

How do I know kids will wear masks? Will they be provided?

Will temperature checks be provided?

With the latency period of this virus (asymptomatic and it takes 2 weeks to show symptoms) how will we know if we have been exposed?

we do not know enough about this disease to be safe in an environment like this!!!! Please do not risk my life and the life of my students and all our loved ones!

Alice Carpenter
Teacher, Moanalua High School

testimony

Mililani Mauka <mililanimaukahsta@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:53 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 Audrey Amona and I am speaking as a teacher, wife, and mother. I teach at Mililani Mauka Elementary and my child attends college at U.H. at Manoa.

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 22+ students in Mililani Mauka's unique and small pie-shaped classrooms. Besides, this 3 foot distancing breaks the agreement the HSTA made with the Board of Education and the Department of Education. The Memorandum of Understanding clearer stated in line #18 that "the parties agree that (the) health and safety of students and staff is the priority…" Lines 69-71 go on to say, "Schools and 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 (6) feet or two (2) arms' length (whichever is longer) of separation…" Line 73 continued with "whenever possible," but if children are required to stay apart for most of the day, staying 3 feet apart would be for significant amounts of time. This short distance apart is not adequate.

My school says that we can fit up to 22 students "comfortably" with 4 feet apart from chair to chair all the way to the back of the classroom near the sink. That is impractical as children will need to wash their hands during the day. This would cause not only more possible contact with children walking near to those seated in near the sink but also a management problems as the congestion in that area grows. Children are not stationary furniture that stay put all day. If we adults are asked to maintain a 6 ft. distance when in public and universities are sticking to the 6 ft. distance for adult students, why are we being asked to half that distance with children?

Lastly, as a wife and mother, I am extremely concerned about the 3 ft. distancing and masks being only "suggested". That opens the door for some families to interpret that as masks are optional. I fear that I will contract COVID and share that with my family with exposure to 22+ children (and their families whom the children are in contact with) each day. As my school dealt with the flu that was spreading before spring recess, parents sent their children to school still coughing, sneezing, lethargic, and with fevers. I realize that there were no masks being worn at that time, but some parents did not think of others when sending their sick children to school. Sadly, I started my spring recess with a four-day fever and lingering symptoms for a many weeks - similar to what the children were exposing the class to in March. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and teachers at risk. I care about my students' education and I want to teach them every day, but their safety and my safety is a priority. I will be teaching my students how to practice good hygiene and safe distancing, but I cannot trust that all parents are doing the same at home. It is no fault to any child who isn't as careful with social distancing, they are children and sometimes 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,
Audrey Amona

Gmail

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

Testimony

dteng@hawaii.rr.com <dteng@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Donna Tengan, I am a teacher at Keaau Middle School, a parent of a student at Waiakea High School and the primary caregiver to my mother and aunt who are high-risk kupuna. 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 for you to require the Department of Education (DOE) to comply with the agreed upon language in the memorandum of understanding implement a 6 foot distancing in school.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools “space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart to reduce risk.” The University of Hawaii announced in their reopening plans that require 6 feet of social distancing in university classrooms and facilities. These are students who are 18 and older. How can the DOE have schools return to a 3 foot policy? Supermarkets, stores, banks and other public spaces are following the 6 foot social distancing but public school teachers and students will only do 3? In my 26 years of teaching, my students are social beings and even if they told to face in one direction they will turn to their peers to talk. Just for clarification, I have middle school students they are 12 – 14 years old. Can you imagine telling a Kindergartener that they need to only face one direction? They are just learning how to behave in school. Shouldn’t the same rules that are expected for the general public be followed in our schools? Aren’t safety for our Keiki and teachers/staff important?

As a teacher, parent and care giver for a high risk kupuna, it concerns me that the DOE is not putting the safety of teachers and students first. It only takes 1 student or faculty member to get Covid-19 and I will be putting my family at risk. Please have the DOE change their requirements to 6 feet and comply with the agreed upon language in the Memorandum.

Please put students and teacher safety first!

Thank you for your consideration.

Donna Tengan

Teacher, Parent, Care Giver

Some themes & topics to personalize:

- As parent and teacher
- As teacher with compromised immune system
- As a teacher caring for high-risk kupuna

Gmail

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

Testimony

Dejah Padon <dejahpadon11@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A). I am deeply concerned as a parent of two school-aged children that our schools will not follow certain safety guidelines that are acknowledge by the world on how to stay safe through this corona virus pandemic. By giving the students an option to wear their masks and shortening the distance indoors from each other by 3 ft will put my children and everyone who they are in contact with in danger. What also alarms me is that you are so willing to put our teachers in jeopardy. Teachers who have families too. Do they not matter? Have you not taken into account the rise of infections in Hawaii or what the rest of the Nation is going through with this virus lately? Hawaii should be more diligent on making sure we follow every health guideline to keep our community safe. I have really been proud on how Hawaii has reacted and mandated guidelines to protect our community since this virus began but this is just unacceptable. Where did we stop caring? I understand that we need to get these kids back to learning but not this way.

Thank you for your time,
Dejah Padon
Concerned Parent of a 6th and 10th grader

--
Dejah Padon

Gmail

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

Testimony

Laura Warner <ljww2@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Obviously more funds, need to be donated to education to protect students and staff. Following Department of Health, and pandemic experts on the 6 foot spacing, and doing tracking to prevent spreading should be DOE's top priority to prevent death, and the severe health concerns of Covid 19.

Laura Warner
Educator
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

G Oka <gokamoka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:59 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 Grant Oka and I am a teacher at Pearl Ridge Elementary School. My son also attends this same school.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable nor confident that the 3 feet distancing is enough space between students to keep a safe distance from each other. I feel it will be 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.

If the CDC recommends 6 foot separation, how is it that being 3 feet a part will be safe? Not requiring students to wear masks in class, in an enclosed room, with A/C, you're saying it will be safe? I'm hearing that research is showing that COVID particles can stay airborne for hours?

I understand the importance of having face to face teaching. I wish this was possible. However, to squeeze a whole class in a classroom with little space between them will not only be risky, it will also be absolutely impossible to monitor and enforce all students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of instruction time and not face, or talk to each other?

How are schools going to be equipped with safety supplies that they need to make sure that we can all stay safe? How will schools be able to monitor for fever? Will we be provided a hospital thermometer to check students? How will we mandate that a child has to stay home if they're sick? We are not only putting students in danger of COVID, but teachers as well.

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. Even with 6 feet distancing, I am still uneasy and worried, but 3 feet is setting up schools for failure.

With COVID cases on the rise with people not listening to social distance rules, what will happen when schools open and large groups of students start to gather? Which school will be the first to shut down from COVID because we tried to do the minimum social distancing or because too many students were allowed to return to school? We'll soon find out.

Sincerely,
Grant Oka

Gmail

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

Testimony VI (A)

jjjjjake@hawaii.rr.com <jjjjjake@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 8:59 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to testify in favor or a 6 foot distancing in our public school classrooms, Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on DOE comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My wife is a teacher at Haiku Elementary on Maui and is very concerned about the safety of our community not to mention the state and country. Thus far, we have all remained home and followed social distancing guidelines and our community spread is low. Unfortunately, much of our country is not following guidelines and pose a threat to our health care systems and those that do not fare well with COVID.

Talking with her, I feel her anxiety about managing large numbers of students (a challenge without a highly contagious disease with the potential to be fatal) with only a 3 ft. distance. In fact, brining 20+ students together in a closed space will not allow any social distancing and transmission of COVID would occur if even one student from one family unit becomes infected. How will a teacher control a large group with proper distancing? My wife and her colleagues have brainstormed ideas and feel that teachers are the best professionals to make a plan for optimal learning. She has been working all summer to digitalize her lessons and teaches a class on-line that is going well with parent support. From our conversations, she is a big advocate of giving parents options, so they will feel part of the process and buy in to whatever decisions are made.

At this time, nothing is normal and it is ludicrous to think that this school year will be "normal." If our country does not practice self discipline, this disruption of business will continue and our health care systems may become overwhelmed while hundreds of thousands die, so to minimize these outcomes, please put a 6 ft distancing in place, so we can put fewer students in classrooms, and control the communal spread of this virus.

With regard,
Scott M. Jacobson

Gmail

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

Testimony

Heather Paulino <paulinomohs@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 6:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please make it mandatory for students to wear face masks in school! Why is this even an issue? Teachers are feeling very worried about returning to the classroom, especially with cases on the rise in our state. Many of us feel that our safety is not being considered, and that everyone's health is going to be jeopardized. Several colleagues have expressed concern and are contemplating not returning to teaching this coming year. Please be vigilant and protect our students AND teachers.

Thank you.

Heather Paulino
Teacher
Moanalua High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Heather Paulino <paulinomohs@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please mandate the 6 feet rule and make students wear masks. We teachers do NOT feel confident about going back into the classroom yet. Please do all you can to make it safe. We cannot afford a slip-up with this crisis.

Heather Paulino
Moanalua High

8 attachments



image0.jpeg
71K



image1.jpeg
113K



image2.jpeg
100K

image3.jpeg
105K





image4.jpeg
95K



image5.jpeg
105K



image6.jpeg
87K



image8.jpeg
104K

Gmail

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

Return to school

Jaime L <kapualani_22@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:04 PM

To whom it may concern,
I'm writing to provide input on DOE guidelines currently in place as we prepare to return back to school. DOE has stated that a distance of three feet needs to be maintained while in the classroom and facing in the same direction. However, CDC and Hawai'i guidelines strongly suggest a distance of six feet apart.
Another concern is the lenient requirement for wearing a mask or face shield while on campus. DOE states that masks need to be worn outside when unable to social distance six feet apart. When working in a small classroom group masks are also not necessary. Students in preschool through second grade aren't required to wear a mask at all. My concern is returning to work in a safe environment where we are all protected by following the appropriate guidelines set forth by the CDC and state of Hawaii. Thank you for your consideration.

Gmail

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

Classroom safety for teachers with asthma

Debra E Jenny <debra_jenny07@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:05 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a teacher with asthma, over 60 years of age, I am in the high risk group if I should contract the COVID virus, as such I must object to students being within 3 feet of each of others which could cause health issues for students and teachers alike.

Teachers should not be exposed to what could amount to death risk by the State not practicing safe distancing protocols in a enclosed classroom environment for the extended period of time during the school day!

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

3feet distance

jenmiwo@hotmail.com <jenmiwo@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:07 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a current Elementary school teacher who is gravely concerned about the 3 feet distance rule the DOE intends implement in at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. The University of Hawaii plans to keep a 6 feet distance and all other businesses must maintain 6 feet so to implement a 3 feet rule for elementary, middle and high schools is extremely irresponsible and upsetting. I have been teaching in the DOE for 11 years and dedicated years to providing a safe and caring environment for my students has and is paramount. The blatant disregard for both my safety and my students safety is sickening and I implore you to reconsider and enact a 6 feet distance to show you care about the students and teachers. Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Wong

Gmail

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

As parent and teacher

Lisa Hee <lisahee@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:09 PM

❄□ ◆♒□❍ ♓♦ ❍♋⍓ ♍□■♍♏❒■🖃

·As parent and teacher I feel that 3
feet is TOO CLOSE and no mask is NOT ACCEPTABLE. Temperature
checks is a MUST and not an option Also teaching using a bubble method should be no more that 15 students per teacher. With the number of cases going up we need to think of the safety for everyone.

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

You Jin Sohn <ysohn@puuhale.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:09 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

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

My name is You Jin Sohn and I am a teacher at Pu'uhale Elementary School.

I strongly feel that it is unsafe for teachers and students to be only 3 feet apart! We should be 6 ft apart and abide by The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. If we are going as far as changing our school schedule why is it that we cannot change that rule. It is the most sensible thing to do. As you may know, there are over 150,000 students and more than 11,000 teachers. If we do not distance ourselves we have a greater and even faster chance of clusters of COVID-19 at many different schools. Not only is this very possible but if any student or teacher brings it home, our family's will also be at risk. I have a 2 year old daughter at home that our elderly parents will be taking care of and it is already a risk to see all of our many students in our classes every day. There are so many lives at stake here and to make matters worse there is no given personal protective equipment. Elementary students especially will already have a difficult time learning how to socially distance.

As you may have family members of your own and children that attend our public schools, I am sincerely asking that you please take this testimony to heart. Our childrens' and the people's health and safety are the most important. Why wait until something happens? Let's please take the necessary precautions now.

Thank you,
You Jin Sohn

Gmail

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

“Testimony”

H Hurst <h.hurst808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:11 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.”

If masks are required at ACE Hardware, it's an embarrassment that they're not required in our public school's.



ACE Hardware_masks required

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

nadine okazawa <nadineokazawa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:12 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Teaching is my life but I don't want it to be my death.

I have been teaching for more than 28 years and would like to continue doing it for a few more years.

I am feel so sorry that the DOE and DOH think 3 feet is social distancing. The many experts around America have said 6 ft outside would be great. But having less than 6 feet indoors is so dangerous.

When I heard that our principal say 3 ft and 20 children (especially first grade) I thought I heard wrong.

We love our children but I can't see gambling their lives and anyone they come in contact as well.

This 3 ft distancing in the classroom is despicable and the responsible people should be held accountable for any problems...teachers excluded because we are just doing what they demanded us to do.

Students are also going to have ...the most difficult time as they are social creatures... it's their nature.

Please remember that we need to teach the students...not have the school close again due to the rapid spread of covid.

Mahalo,
Nadine Okazawa

Gmail

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

Testimony to Item VI

Daria Boone <daria.boone@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning BOE directors,

My name is Daria Boone, long time teacher here on the island of Maui at Haiku Elementary School. I write today to testify on Item VI (A) on the agenda: Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My concern here is that not enough consideration is going into the CDC's recommended guidelines of 6ft apart distance in the classroom. Having students only 3 feet apart is problematic as students and teachers will be in very close proximity to one another, students will be urged to chat and lean towards their classmates naturally; if they have a cold or a sudden sneeze, they will be too close to one another. As a parent educator, I am also concerned with the health and safety of my child returning to school under such guidelines. Every child and every household goes about their day to day activities, encounters with other families, family members, jobs, where we will have no idea who they have come into contact with. With travel opening up to the tourists August 1st, my concern for the spreading of the Covid-19 virus is also of utmost importance.
We will once again be sharing space with the tourists and will have closer proximity to them, which could also spread the virus amongst our students and teachers, and community members.

I do not feel valued as an educator, feel placed in a bind of what to do with my own child in this dire situation. Each day I am stressed out about what to do about my job and my child's education due to Covid-19 and the potential spread of it. With the cases rising on Oahu, and soon on Maui, as interisland and domestic travel heightens, the spread will continue. I do not feel protected to be on the front lines as an educator at this time and ask you to please show you care about the teachers and students enough to do your due diligence in spreading students further apart, at least 6 ft.
Thank you for your time.

--
Ms. Daria Boone
Fifth Grade GLC
808-575-3000

daria.boone@k12.hi.us
Have a great day!

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

Robert Maddox <rmaddox0803@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:13 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.

Aloha, my name is Carolyn Maddox and my husband and I have four children, two in Mililani Uka and two in Mililani High School. We are a family of six with two working adults and we take every precaution to ensure we do our part as a family to prevent the spread of Covid19 so it is our hope that our children's school leaders will share that same sense of responsibility and mandate facemasks in the classrooms and/or ensure the social distancing of 6ft apart is adhered to. We know that these are unprecedented times and trying to safely return the students to school will be a challenge in and of itself so we do appreciate all your efforts and hard work towards this goal. We ask that you please take into consideration our concerns for the safety not just for our children but for all the students, teachers and staff.

Thank you!

Please Revise Classroom Requirements to 6 Foot Distancing.

Kristyn Kuroda <midorikins@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am an educator who is going on my 5th year of teaching. Through my 4 previous years in the DOE, I have taught in kindergarten, 2nd grade and 3rd grade. For this upcoming year, I will be in a 5th grade classroom. I'd like to think that my experience in a variety of grade levels are helpful when taking this email into consideration. I am writing in hopes that you will HIGHLY consider the importance of 6-foot distancing in the classroom WITH the requirement of mask usage in the classroom.

Bottom Line: It's Dangerous
This is a given. If by law, we are required to socially distance SIX FEET WITH MASKS REQUIRED in restaurants, stores, and doctor's offices, why is it different in a classroom? This gives the impression that the lives of restaurant staff, retail workers, and medical staff *ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR KEIKI AND TEACHERS*.

The Evidence
Through multiple discussions with friends and family, who represent state and federal employees, as well as workers from private companies, the general consensus from the 11 employees I talked to was: 6-foot distancing and masks are required in public areas, but within their personal space, masks are optional. If telework is possible, to the best of the employer's ability, they opted to allow working from home.

Employees Asked: Federal/Pearl Harbor (3), University of Hawaii system (2), State buildings: Judiciary, Legislature, DOT (4), private companies (2).

The Proposal
One of the biggest concerns as to how 6-foot distancing would work in a classroom is space. How can a room that's meant for 25 students sitting side-by-side suddenly get reduced? While budgeting for more teachers and buildings is certainly out of the question, with the new option of rotating students, we are one step toward the right direction. However, to continue to do so, I implore you to fight for the importance of increasing the requirements to 6-foot distancing WITH MASKS in the classroom. While the classroom is more contained and private, we are still ultimately sharing this space with the keiki. We are still breathing air in close proximity to them. Please enforce the usage of masks on campus AT ALL TIMES.

Mahalo,
Kristyn
5th Grade Elementary School Teacher

Testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

doku69 <doku69@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Terrill Watkins and I am a Safety Professional currently employed by the Department of Defense (DoD). I am also an educator facilitating graduate and undergraduate students in multiple courses for the DoD and various universities. Several of my friends and peers are educators and faculty at Campbell High School, Mililani High School, and Waipahu 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.

The current data from the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other health organizations specifically speaks to the efficacy of personal hygiene (hand washing), physical distancing, and the use of face masks to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, these same health care professionals recommend that as educational facilities prepare to reopen, particular care be taken to maintain a minimum of 6 feet distancing for students and faculty. The Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools proposes allowing students to be 3 feet apart in classrooms, and is disharmonious with the current data. Furthermore, in the proposed plan there is no specific mandate for those attending schools to wear masks; per the proposed plan the wearing of masks is only highly recommended. I am deeply concerned with regard to the level of risk the Department of Education is proposing to assume as related to the health and safety of the faculty, educators, students, and the families; I do not feel that this assumption of risk is prudent at this time given the circumstances. Lastly, the current rise in COVID-19 cases being experienced in Hawai‘i is enough to indicate an urgent need to rethink how we protect all those who access the educational system, and even more so for those identified to have higher risks due to respiratory and other health issues. The plan to reopen for school year 2020-2021 must be reconsidered.

With the recent increase in COVID-19 infections across Hawai‘i it is vital we be judicious in pausing to rethink the proposed reopening plans, with a focus on maintaining recommended physical distancing, mandated use of masks, and minimizing the number of students required to be on campus. The emphasis of our efforts to maximize safety and minimize spread should be founded on leveraging our current capabilities to build and maintain a robust e-learning/distance learning environment for all of our students. We are in uncharted waters due to the unpredictable and potentially long-term nature of the current pandemic.

I deeply care for all our students, our educators, our faculty, and their families. As we work to improve education for all, we must remember that the health and safety of our community is at the core of what we do as servant leaders.

Thank you for allowing me to provide my testimony.

Terri Watkins Ed.D., CSP, SMS, OHST, CSMP
Occupational Health and Safety Division Head
PHNSY & IMF - Code 106.1

Animo et Fide (Courage and Faith)

Gmail

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

Returning to school

Gmail <matthewsdemille@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

I am a member of the Waikoloa School SCC Board, parent of 3 children attending Waikoloa school and a local business man.
My email is in regards to the upcoming school year. I strongly feel that our children need to be in school 5 days a week. We are very fortunate that my wife is able to stay home with my children, however a lot of families in our community and state do not have the same opportunity. Children need to be in school as it's a place of protection. Many families require dual income which means many kids will be home alone, un supervised. Another concern is in the children's progression. Most are not getting the attention at home and do most of their learning in the schools. We also have had a major increase in Kidnappings, child abuse and trafficking. Having kids in school will help prevent this.

The risk of the above far exceeds the risk of contracting covid 19.
I am thinking if the health and well being of the students attending Waikoloa elementary/ middle School.

Mahalo,

Matt DeMille

Gmail

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

3’ and no masks

Tracy Davis-Kakiuchi <tracydc489@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing this email to express my deep disappointment in hearing that schools will not be following protocols for public health and safety. When I initially read through the agreement I thought, “Big deal! They’re agreeing to what we all need to do anyway to stay healthy.” Although I have no children, I was disappointed to see you would not be assisting those teachers who have children at home should we have a virtual school necessity, but not surprised. When I saw that it was decided to cut the social distancing of 6’ to 3’ I was furious. Six feet is not a random number- there is scientific reasoning that decides that number. Add to that no masks and you are obviously putting everyone’s health at risk. Don’t pretend that you are preserving the health of faculty, staff and students if you make this decision. It is insulting. Just be straightforward and admit that preserving the health in our school environment is not a priority, then talk about how much to cut pay. When done perhaps discuss why there is a teacher shortage and the schools are not doing better. Students deserve better, and so do faculty and staff.

Tracy Kakiuchi

Gmail

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

Testimony

michelle morales <morales808@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:18 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha my name is Michelle Samante and I work as a 2nd grade teacher at Mililani Uka Elementary. I have a 9 year old who also attends Uka and a High Schooler who will be attending Mililani 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 that the 3ft distance is a safe enough separation between the students and staff members. I believe we should maintain the 6ft or two arm length distance in the classroom as we do out in the community. Please hear our cry for support as we only want to keep our children and coworkers safe.

Thank you,
Michelle Samante

July 7th, 2020

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Christine Russo and 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." Today I come to you not only as a Campbell High School teacher but as a parent of a kindergartner entering school this year at Ewa Elementary.

I am extremely concerned about the DOE's plan to reopen schools. I was looking forward to a cautious and measured reopening plan and unfortunately this plan is neither cautious nor measured. I want to be clear-I support the reopening of schools. However we need to be extremely prudent on how we do so, and while I understand we want our kids to enjoy the type of in-person learning experiences that are best for students, it is absolutely crucial we balance this with an overall duty of care to ensure that neither our keiki nor our faculty and staff spread Covid-19 amongst ourselves, our families, and our community**. Sending students into a situation in which they can not be properly socially distanced at a minimum of 6 feet is not only irresponsible but it is negligent.**

On the mainland we have witnessed the missteps in reopening and the ensuing consequences of this rush to action. It is unfortunate that we seem to oscillate between 2 extremes: a complete shutdown vs a broad reopening (or in the case of Hawaii schools, a complete shutdown vs a return to school without proper social distancing). And while I understand that many of our schools are not returning to 100% business as usual, it is clear that the resumption will involve major contradictions to what we've been told time and again will keep ourselves and our community safe such as proper social distancing and wearing facial coverings.

The call to action is clear—on any given day we need to ensure that there are an absolute minimal number of students on campus. This is not ideal for learning however it is ideal for keeping our students, teachers, administrators, and staff members from getting sick and possibly enduring the long-term health consequences of Covid-19 or dying. If a typical class size is between 20-35 students, then there absolutely should not be more than a quarter to a third of that number of students in the classroom at any given time, especially considering most of our classrooms are very small learning spaces. My largest class size is 30 students, and even if only half of the students are in my class at any given time, this is still too many students in the small space of my classroom to properly socially distance. On the other hand if only a quarter of these students were in class with me on any given day, I am confident I would be able to properly socially distance my kids.

Just a few days ago on July 6th, 239 scientists from around the world wrote an open letter entitled It is Time to Address Airborne Transmission of COVID-19. As stated in this open letter, "**scientists have demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that viruses are released during exhalation, talking, and coughing in microdroplets small enough to remain aloft in air and pose a risk of exposure at distances beyond 1 to 2 m from an infected individual." This suggests, according to MIT Tech Review, "that social distancing may be insufficient, especially indoors. This may place yet more importance on mask-wearing around people who are not part of your household if you meet them indoors, even if you are distancing, and increasing ventilation in enclosed areas." Thus not only should students be placed at a**

minimum of 6 feet apart, but to truly keep the virus from circulating in the room and infecting others we need to ensure that students are place *MORE* than 6 feet apart as much as possible in conjunction with face masks.

This brings me to my next point. There has been weak language coming out of the DOE on facial coverings, yet we know that this is one of the best ways to prevent transmission of Covid-19. As discussed above, if even 6 feet of social distancing is insufficient to prevent the spread of Covid-19, then there is an even greater importance that all of us—students, staff, teachers, administrators—wear facial coverings. And while I understand some exceptions may need to be made for those with medical conditions or disabilities, there must be a general precedent that facial coverings are worn on campus for the safety of everyone. It is not fair to our kids or our teachers to require facial coverings to grab something from the grocery store but to not require it for a classroom where several individuals are stuck in the same space for an extended period of time. Additionally, unlike public spaces such as the grocery store, teachers are required to be at work and students are required to be at school—we can't just walk away when we feel someone is being unsafe or putting our lives in jeopardy. It is for this reason it is incumbent upon the Board to ensure a safe reopening with adequate social distancing among everyone on campus and facial coverings as an established norm. **In any situation in which a mask is not being worn, physical distancing of *more* than 6 feet should be employed, the room should be well-ventilated, and the others in the room should have access to the type of PPE meant to prevent contraction of Covid-19 such as N-95 masks. This is especially important for our teachers and staff working with medically fragile students.**

In order to properly socially distance students in their return to school, distance learning will need to be a major component of the back to school plan. We need to sufficiently resource schools with the necessary technology requirements including devices and hot spots so that they can engage in learning off campus. When students are on campus, there should be a minimal amount of students present at any given time. This will facilitate distancing as well as making proper sanitization of the campus and classrooms less cumbersome for custodial staff; schools do not have sufficient custodial capacity to properly sanitize our campuses; even with a reduced amount of students on campus, schools will need more custodial support because as I understand it, **schools do not have the capacity to sanitize desks and classroom spaces throughout the day and in between each class period when a new group of students is entering the room.**

In closing I urge you to please ensure that the health and safety of our keiki and those working within our schools come first as our schools reopen. We want to go back to educating our keiki, but this is literally a life or death situation and we must open schools up judiciously and further expand the opening only when we can ensure the virus will not be transmitted throughout our schools and and into the community. **There is a way to do this right and it absolutely must include an expectation of facial coverings, physical distancing of a minimum of 6 feet, and no more than a quarter to a third of students on campus at any given time.**

Mahalo for your time and for your consideration,

Christine Russo
Ewa Beach, HI

Gmail

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

Testimony

Arash Steindamm <arashiotoshi108@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:23 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 whom it may concern:

My name is Arash Steindamm and I teach physics at Kealakehe High School in Kona, Hawai'i Island. I thought it was wise to close schools during the fourth quarter of last school year, however, because of the aggressive nature of this virus, I do not think that will be long enough. We can look to what is happening in Arizona, Texas, Florida, and other states as case studies of what to not do with this terrible outbreak: open up state programs too early at the expense of people's lives because of restlessness.

I feel like having conservative measures, such as a longer closure of school and going to 100% distance learning, is the way to go. We are at a small window of time where we need to recognize that the inconveniences of childcare and free and reduced lunches, which are worth considering, pale in comparison to what could happen if we don't act swiftly and appropriately.

As a high school teacher, I have personally observed the lack of hygiene from our students (which is understandable). So many of them chew their fingernails, constantly rub their face, share food, water bottles, earbuds, shake hands, the list goes on. Combine those habits with 15-20 students per classroom that may attend 4-6 different per classes a day, I think we can understand that we are creating many many different possible vector points for this virus. The idea of trying to have students practice social distancing and to wear masks for 8 hours during stiflingly hot weather is unrealistic. I feel like teachers will be too distracted with trying to make sure students are following the proper procedures put into place and will not be able to properly instruct our students. When the students return to their homes they can easily spread this virus to our kupuna.

What does not make sense at all is how can we say that we can safely open schools. I feel like opening schools is putting much of our population at risk.

Please try to fight what is best for Hawai'i, the United States, and Earth.

Mahalo for your hard work.
Arash Steindamm.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ken Hashi <hashik001@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:23 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 Ken Hashi and I am speaking as a teacher and senior citizen. I am currently a math teacher at Aiea High School and have been teaching for the past ten years.

I strongly support the need for students to be separated at least six feet in the classroom and to require students to wear face masks in the classroom. Although I am 70 years old and consider myself to be in very good health, the prevalence and uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus is a very real concern for me. Requiring students to be or not be separated by six feet in the classroom and having them wear face-mask in the classroom will determine if I will continue to teach.

In addition, my wife is a registered nurse at the Family Health Clinic at Tripler Army Medical Center. If I contract the COVID-19 virus, it also will expose my wife to the virus and prevent her from working at the Family Health Clinic which currently only has about 60 percent of their staffing positions filled. Consequently, active duty personnel and their dependents will have further delays in receiving timely medical care.

In closing, teachers and their spouses, some who are considered essential workers, will be placed at greater risk without the safeguards of the six foot separation of students and requiring them to wear face masks in the classroom. If teachers contract the virus, then students will not be receiving the best education during an already challenging learning environment.

Sincerely,

Ken Hashi
Math Teacher
Aiea High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Haydee Magaoay <haydeemagaoay@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:25 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 school's plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My Name is Haydee N. Magaoay and I am speaking as a parent of two lovely daughters who are incoming 1st and 2nd grade at August Ahrens Elementary School. As a parent, I am not comfortable that the 3ft 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 with each other will not only be risky, but will absolutely impossible for a classroom management to really monitor and enforce students to stay in their seats for the whole duration of their class. As a parent, I am extremely concerned on the safety of my children about their 3ft distancing and masks being optional. As much as I want to send my children to school at this time of pandemic, I want to request the DOE to impose proper and better proposal to modify their imposition of rules before the school opening. With no vaccine still, schools cannot make the mistake of putting our children and their teachers at risk. I care about my children's education but their safety is my priority. I am hoping for the consideration of DOE to this request. Let's all be safe and healthy in this time of crisis.

Mahalo and God bless us all.

Sincerely,
Haydee N. Magaoay
Parent

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation in DOE comprehensive plan for reopening schools

Sanoe Ilaoa <silaoa7407@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:26 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to testify in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation in Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

I am Sanoe' Eselu-Ilaoa, a stay at home mother with 6 children, whom attend August Ahrens Elementary School in Waipahu. As I understand, August Ahrens is the biggest elementary school in the state. To hear that schools will be opened back up come August was very surprising, to say the least.

Why are we not following the CDC's guidelines to have our kids 6ft. apart? And masks will not be required to be worn by the kids or staff? 3ft. distancing in the classroom will not cut it. Everywhere we go - supermarkets, stores, the post office, the beach .. they all require 6ft. distance. They all require masks. So why are we not following those same guidelines in our classrooms?? I'm extremely disappointed that the safety of our children and teachers are not more of a priority! I have four of my six children at August Ahrens Elementary. I cannot afford to have any of them coming home with the virus and spreading it to their siblings, to us (their parents) or their grandparents, who also live with us. And we all know the older ones - our kupuna - are most susceptible to COVID-19.

A different approach must be taken; I implore you to please keep the schools closed at least until the cases subside. We've seen a spike in cases since we've opened everything back up! What ever happened to the DOE's decision to not open up schools UNTIL there are NO COVID-19 cases for 4 full weeks? For the safety of our children, teachers, kupuna... PLEASE reconsider opening schools until these cases subside and we can flatten the curve again.

So many other parents that I'm speaking with are looking at different homeschooling options for this school year because it's just too much of a risk to send our kids to school. Personally, my children are my number one priority and they are definitely NOT worth the risk. PLEASE reconsider opening the schools back up. Push back the opening if anything. Figure out a plan to do distance learning instead. There are soooo many other ways (much safer ways) to do this.

The health and safety of our people are the most important. PLEASE reconsider and try to work on other proposals or plans that might be a better (Safer) fit for our children returning to school.

Thank you so much for your time. I really do appreciate it.

Aloha,

Sanoe' Eselu-Ilaoa
Email: Silaoa7407@gmail.com
Cell: #(808) 366-3693

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ayrine Simeon <irenes@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:27 PM
Reply-To: irenes@hawaii.rr.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Ayrine Simeon and my child attends Keaau High 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 would not feel comfortable sending my child to school with a three foot spacing rule in place. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a 6-foot spacing between desks and any spacing smaller than that puts students at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. With a three foot spacing I do not feel that school is a safe place for my child to be.

After my child experienced virtual and online learning, we have come to the conclusion that in person instruction is much better that learning through a computer screen. In a classroom you can interact with the teacher and students, ask questions freely, understand the teachers body language and voice, and learn more comfortably in a familiar setting.

I strongly encourage the Board of Education to mandate a 6-foot distance between student seating. Schools and classrooms should be a safe place with the health of our children and educators of utmost importance. My child and I should not feel that school is an unsafe place to be. Why should students have to choose between their health and safety or a quality educational experience?

Thank you and please take this into consideration,
Ayrine Simeon

Testimony

Kylee Sullivan <kylee.sullivan@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern

My name is Kylee Nicole Sullivan. I am a secondary level educator who works on the Big Island of Hawai'i at Pahoa High and 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; specifically on the item of the DOE attempting to implement a 3 feet disancing requirement in the classroom as well as relaxing mask recommendation, both of which go directly against the recommendations from the Center of Disease Control (CDC). With 41 cases across the state of Hawai'i, relaxing these CDC recommendations in order to get more students into a classroom for this coming school year is not only reckless but also poses a gross and imminent danger to the students, faculty, and family of each school. What's more is that the DOE attempting to implement this amendment implies that the people in charge appear to care more about test results and grades than they do about the safety and wellbeing of the faculty and students. What's a few people sick if our SAT scores statewise go up?

Now, I myself am not immunocompromised at all. However, I have several close friends with illnesses ranging from severe heart problems, asthma, endometriosis, and various forms and stages of cancer who I not only have contact with but are also educators as well. By attempting to implement the aforementioned changes, the DOE is affirming that their safety does not matter so long as a handful more students (some of which may *also* be immunocompromised) into a single classroom or a single school.

I also have a father who, while in phenomenal health, is also in his mid-sixties. He had a heart attack fifteen years ago and was put on medication but has since recovered in full. I do not get to see my father often but when I do I spend as much time with him as I can. If the DOE implements the 3 feet apart and relax mask recommendation, they are not only putting myself in danger of contracting COVID but also my father. I could end up being an asymptomatic carrier who is lucky enough to survive it; but, one trip to see my father could result in him contracting it from myself. This in turn, could lead to his untimely death as the other 539,451 people worldwide have. I do not want to be responsible for my father's death and I would hope the DOE wouldn't either. I do not want him, my fellow educators, or any student to add to that worldwide total and become a statistic. If DOE opens up classrooms to more students and do not require masks or the recommended 6 foot distance I hope they acknowledge that they are willingly and knowingly contributing students and educators to this worldwide statistic.

My name is Kylee Nicole Sullivan. I am a secondary educator at Pahoa High and Intermediate School, I am twenty-six, fresh out of graduate school with a Masters degree in Secondary Education and I am afraid. I am afraid to go back to my classroom with the implementations the DOE is pushing. I am afraid because I am afraid of contracting COVID and spreading it to the people I love. I am afraid of dying; I am afraid of people I love dying due to this negligent implementation. Why do all personal points I mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph matter? Because I want the DOE to know my name and the name of every single person testifying. I want the DOE to know our names and our schools because I want you to know that we matter and that if we die from COVID *because* of these implementations I want it to weigh on their conscience. Lives are being put in danger potentially because of this. I want that to be known.

I appreciate your time and hope this testimony changes your outlook on the situation.

Sincerely,
Kylee Nicole Sullivan

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Katrina Kanemoto <kkanemoto78@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing to you 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 would like the Board of Education to mandate the 6 foot rule between students and teachers. This is a CDC recommendation and I believe that the Department of Education should follow the CDC's recommendation. I have also been reading articles that mainland schools are spreading desks 6ft apart but, Superintendent Kishimoto says that 3 feet is okay.

Another concern is that Superintendent Kishimoto also said that students do not have to wear masks in the classroom. Our classrooms are air conditioned and we do not have big windows to provide fresh air circulation. We only have one row of narrow windows at the top of the walls. I'm concerned that if students are not wearing masks in the classroom in an air conditioned class with students sitting less than 3ft. apart, there is a higher chance of catching Covid. Lower grade students need a lot of reminders about proper hygiene and I am very concerned about students coughing and sneezing without covering their mouths and this is circulating in the air conditioning. The news has also been reporting on how covid droplets can stay in the air for longer periods of time and can circulate in air conditioned rooms. If students are not wearing masks, this will be putting everyone at a higher risk if a student has covid.

My last concern is that Superintendent Kishimoto stated that schools will not be taking the students' temperatures when they come to school and that students will be visually observed for any signs of covid or illness. This is very concerning to me as students do not always inform an adult if they are not feeling well especially younger students. The airports, state capitol and other work sites take the temperature of working adults before they can enter the workplace but, schools where many students and teachers will be together all day won't be taking daily temperatures is very concerning for me.

Please put yourself in our situations. Would you feel safe going to work daily in an air conditioned room with 17 students with no masks, sitting 3 feet apart, and did not have a daily temperature check? Then, go home to your own children and high risk parents and just hope that you weren't exposed to covid and give it to them.

These three safety strategies are very important and I find it very concerning that the Board of Education has not mandated that these strategies be followed by all schools. I have spoken to friends who are state workers and who work in private businesses and they are all following the 6 feet rule, wear masks, and take daily temperature checks but, the Superintendent is saying that these strategies do not need to be implemented in schools. If the Board of Education does not mandate these strategies to prevent the spread of covid, will the state and board of education be liable if we are to catch Covid from our students who don't have to wear masks, be 6 feet apart, and take daily temperature checks and we bring it home to our family as my parents are high risk? Will the state and board of education also pay for our medical expenses if we are to contract covid at the workplace? Daily temperature checks, wearing masks, and social distancing 6 feet apart does work because these safety strategies prevented an outbreak from occurring with the state worker who tested positive for covid at the state capitol. I would appreciate it if the Board of Education mandated these strategies in all schools as a preventative for an outbreak and to keep teachers and students safe at school.

Sincerely,
Katrina Kanemoto
Aiea Elementary School

Gmail

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

School reopening concerns

Keone & Steph <kunis@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a teacher at Mililani Middle School. I am concerned about the recent news that schools will be reopened with 2 points. First, the news that 3 foot distancing would be used in the classrooms. Out in the community (Grocery stores, Goodyear, Toyota to name a few that I have experienced) 6 feet has been the accepted recommendation. Having students only 3 feet apart increases the risks of them infecting each other, which also means the snowball effect of then infecting the teacher, his/her coworkers, and family. I believe individuals may be asymptotic but still be able to infect others.

The other concern I have is the optional use of masks by students. Again, in places of business, masks are required. No mask, no service. It is a safeguard to possibly prevent spreading the virus. Why then is it optional , especially considering the recommended 6 foot distance has been cut in half?

As a teacher with a family to provide for, I do not believe these conditions provide a safe workplace environment. My suggestions then are 6 foot distancing to be consistent with what is expected out in the community, masks are to be required to be worn. If not, then Distance Learning is the only safe way for the majority

Sincerely,
Bryan K. Kuniyoshi
Teacher
Mililani Middle School

Gmail

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

Allowing 3 feet distance in the classroom

Ivy Kitamura <ivy.kitamura@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:31 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,
My name is Ivy Kitamura, a EL/Art teacher at Kaimuki High School. I was notified by HSTA that Superintendent Kishimoto is allowing students to be 3 feet apart in the classroom as long as the students are facing the same direction. I am confused how students being 3 feet apart in the classroom is safe when the CDC has been notifying our country to stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Does Superintendent Kishimoto have another reliable source that everyone else does not know about?

If this 3 feet distancing of students is allowed in the classroom, I would not want to return to work. I care for my 89 year old mother who struggles with asthma, so if I contract it and pass it on to her, this would be devastating to my family. In addition, it places our students and staff at school at risk that can be avoided. Please reconsider this rule and change it so that students will be 6 feet apart or more. Thank you.

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

testimony

kona kanani <konakanani@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:31 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 Kory Toyozaki, I am a special education teacher at Lehua Elementary. For the safety of my family, students, and state of Hawaii, I beg that you hear the CDC's recommendations and space desks at least 6 feet apart. They characterize students who are not spaced apart as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. We know that students have a difficulty time facing forward for 5 minutes, how can we expect them to face forward all day without wearing a mask. For the safety of our beautiful state, please think of our keiki. Six feet apart while wearing a mask. Please. Mahalo, Kory

Gmail

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

Student seating distance

Mike S <maikosilva@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:32 PM
To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please reconsider the decision to reopen schools with the option of 3 feet of distancing. 6 feet should be the standard for The safety of all students, faculty and their respective families. Mahalo!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Ashley Uyehara <ashleyu@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Ashley Uyehara and I am an Educational Assistant at Ala Wai Elementary School and my daughter attends that school as well.
As a parent and Educational Assistant I was bothered when it was announced that the desk will be 3 feet apart in classrooms as long as the kids are sitting and facing forward. Being in a classroom I see kids who turn around and want to talk to friends and now being away from each other due to COVID they are going to want to engage more with each other. I work with kids who are in need of one to one help and there are times they can't cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze and they're going to be only 3 feet. That is an open door for me, my colleagues, daughter, and students to catch something. We have been hearing on the news for the last three months to social distance and stay 6 feet. Why can restaurants, bars, gyms, stores, and other businesses put up signs 6 feet apart and pixie glass so their social distancing between everyone? But my child will have to sit next to another child with only 3 feet of distance. That's not keeping everyone safe in the classroom; it needs to be following the 6 feet distance.

The other issue that was mentioned was masks not being required to wear in class but is required when you're outdoors. Today we had 41 cases out of the 41 Honolulu had 38 due to people gathering and not wearing face coverings. There are teachers who are older and students who suffer from asthma or other health conditions. The mask right now is the only option we have to protect us and everyone around us from spreading this virus. Being in the class is more confined then being outside. So it makes no sense in wearing a covering outside then not wearing inside. As our Mayor made the mandate for wearing masks then why can't it be mandated in school?

I really hope that the DOE really thinks long and hard about the decisions that are being made. Right now I feel that the decisions that were brought to my attention are not keeping anyone safe and this will lead to more cases in the future, then we will have to shut down again and kids will lose more education time.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Eileen Tokunaga <etoku@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:28 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am submitting written testimony on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Eileen Tokunaga. As a grandparent of a 2nd grader at Wilson Elementary School, I am requesting that the BOE advise the DOE to require that classrooms accommodate 6 feet social distancing and that students wear masks at all times while on campus.

Reopening schools is necessary and the DOE faces the monumental task of figuring out how to do it to best ensure the safety and health of the children and staff. Although there are many unanswered questions about Covid-19, many researchers, medical personnel, and government officials agree that the airborne virus is highly transmissible. Consequently, the CDC recommends social distancing of at least 6 feet, wearing masks, and practicing good hygiene to minimize the spread of the virus.

The past 4 months have demonstrated the importance of these CDC guidelines as evidenced by the pattern of increases in infections and hospitalizations in States where the guidelines were not mandatory. Fortunately, government officials in Hawaii have been proactive by requiring businesses to implement social distancing of at least 6 feet and by requiring everyone to wear masks while in public. The DOE should do the same. The DOE "blended rotation" instructional model appears to allow for social distancing of at least 6 feet within the classroom.

Realistically, it would be impossible for all the children and staff to practice social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times. Consequently, the wearing of masks in the classroom is equally essential in minimizing the spread of the virus. Many schools across our nation require it on campus. Most children in Hawaii already wear masks in public. Likewise, the DOE should require that masks be worn in the classroom as well as on the playground.

The BOE should advise the DOE to comply with CDC guidelines to best ensure the safety and health of the children and staff. Compliance with the guidelines is essential, more so as the tourist industry is being opened up simultaneously with the schools.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Samantha Tufaga <samantha.tufaga@mles.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:33 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Samantha Tufaga and I am a 5th grade teacher at Mauka Lani Elementary school in Kapolei, Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As per the agreement between the Hawai'i BOE and the state, with the recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), that in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 schools and worksites should maintain a separation of six feet or two arms' lengths. Personally, I feel uncomfortable being in a workplace that is not following the guidelines agreed upon. As of July 1, 2020, it was preferred by the admin that our students return back to school as a whole (with minor adjustments). These adjustments do not include the six foot separation, and instead abides by the three foot separation.

I do not feel that a three foot distance is safe for my students, nor myself. I can't imagine being in a classroom with 25 or more students at a 3 foot distance. With any type of mandated distance, it will be hard for students to learn in the classroom because it removes any possibility of centers and rotations, as well as group work. These three things are very helpful for not only student learning, but also classroom management and behavior. While I am happy to sacrifice it for the wellbeing and safety of my students, I am not happy to sacrifice it for a three foot distance. In a three foot distance, students are still able to reach and touch other students and their belongings.

As someone that has grown up with asthma their whole life, COVID-19, a respiratory disease, has been a huge stressor for me these past few months. I know that a six foot distance and a mask are not full-proof methods, however I feel safer knowing that we are doing as much as we can to keep everyone in the classroom safe. Allowing schools to stay 3 feet apart is a big slap in the face to those of us that are susceptible to the virus.

I have only been teaching for 2 years, but this is a job that I love. I love the kids that I work with everyday. I love the parents that have made me feel like family. I love my colleagues that work so hard in the classroom. I don't love feeling like I am disposable. I don't love risking my students' lives, their family's lives, my life, or my family's life. I don't love that some people in power don't believe wearing a mask in the workplace is important and that masks are "a false sense of security." I want to continue to love my job, but I can't do that when I feel like the health of many people are on the line.

We are getting new cases every day in the double digits. Back in March when we had closed our school after spring break, we were seeing about 5-10 cases a day. If we were so quick to close down then, why are we so eager to open now? Why did we sign an agreement, only for it to be discarded?

In conclusion, I do not support the 3 foot minimum distance. We have seen several schools across the globe close down after reopening. Although I love my job, I am not willing to sacrifice my health for it. I know there is no perfect model or plan for the reopening of schools, but I do know that there are better steps we can take to ensure the safety of teachers and keiki.

Mahalo,
Samantha Tufaga

5th Grade Teacher
Mauka Lani Elementary School
Kapolei, Hawai'i

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sara Koide <sara.koide@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name Sara Koide and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Wilcox Elementary School on the island of Kaua'i. I am submitting this 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.

As per the memorandum of understanding signed by both Hawaii State Teachers Association and the Hawaii State Department of Education, 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.” There was no language in the MOU that indicated that a 3 feet distance would be acceptable. As a kindergarten teacher there is already a learning curve that the students need to reach involving personal hygiene and personal space prior to COVID-19, so I foresee this year being more of a struggle as there are more guidelines being put in place to open up the school year. The guidelines are there for us to follow as best we can in order to keep our keiki healthy and safe. Trying to suggest that 3ft is acceptable is very irresponsible of the superintendent especially when it clearly goes against the CDC recommendations and was not agreed upon in our memorandum of understanding. It is disappointing to see that there is little concern for the health and safety of public school employees, keiki and their families.

This is a scary time, yet we are moving forward trying our best to support our keiki as best as we can. This includes ensuring parents that school will be a safe space for their children to go to learn and grow. The first step is for everyone to abide by the agreement, not suggest something else. I may be a new teacher, but I love my job. I love making a difference in these student's lives however, I do not support making rash suggestions risking everyone's health just so there's a little more space.

If we are to open schools, please open it as safely as possible.

Mahalo,

Sara Koide

Kindergarten, Wilcox Elementary School, Kaua'i Complex

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Gmail

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

Teatimony

kahalewaimil@aol.com <kahalewaimil@aol.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing regarding 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 Jamie Kahalewai and I am a teacher at Radford High School.

I feel the 3 feet social distancing requirement is unreasonable. My 3 daughters will be starting/returning to college in the fall. If they are subjected to this same rule I would have them change their classes to be taken online.

When we go out we do our best to adhere to the 6 feet rule why is it different in schools?

I will also be helping to care for both of my parents who have cancer. Therefore, I would not want to be exposed to anyone who could infect me.

Sincerely,
Jamie Kahalewai

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Gmail

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

re: Family Testimony

Funtanilla Sabas Family <funtanillasabas@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:34 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Education is important to my family, but so is our health and safety.

I am the oldest of three siblings. My sister and I are both teachers, our younger brother is a firefighter. All three of us siblings are married to teachers and we all work at different schools on Oahu. Between us three married couples, we have six children, ages 12, 9, 5, 3, 1 and a newborn who was born right after the stay at home shelter orders went into effect.

Our parents, who are now retired, love their grandchildren and have always been willing to help us out when babysitting. With the reopening of schools in August, we will all be relying on them a lot more heavily to watch our children. My two sons will be with them on the days they have to distance learn and cannot be on campus. They will also be babysitting the younger children to varying degrees to enable all that we siblings and their spouses will be able to go into work.

Our family has been very serious about taking precautions during this lockdown period. Several of the children within our family had birthdays during this time--all spent away from one another without cousins to share in the days we should be celebrating. Our parents went several months without hugging their grandchildren. Even sadder was that it took them two months to finally hold the newest addition to our family member in fear that any one of us could be COVID-19 positive and not know it.

Because of this, we need every precaution to be taken for teachers and students when going back to school. We don't want any one of us to bring anything home to our families, who live in four separate households. If any one of us tested positive for COVID-19, it would have far-reaching effects, not just for our individual families, but for our schools and community as well.

If any of us tested positive, all of us would have to be placed under self-quarantine. Our family also has vulnerable members--some of us immune-compromised, have underlying health conditions or are within a critical age category. With five teachers and one firefighter out of the workforce for a few weeks, that would roughly impact about 250+ of our students, not including our co-workers. Also affected include both my son's middle and 4th grade classmates and my kindergarten nephew's class. In all, that's six schools and 1 fire station being negatively impacted from our family alone.

We implore you, that while you are planning to reopen schools, to not only put education first, but also consider the health and safety of all those going back into the classroom. We ask that students be spaced 6 feet apart with masks on. My family's health and safety, as well as the school's and community beyond, depend on this to be the requirement when we go back to school.

Mahalo,
Jamielyn Sabas

Testimony

Jennifer Reale <jenniferfreale@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Department of Education and Board of Education,

My name is Jennifer Reale 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 a 5th grade teacher at Makakilo Elementary School. I am also a mother of three children (Luca 5 years old, Adelina 3 years old, and Anya 3 months old). Luca will be attending school for the first time as a kindergartener at Mauka Lani Elementary School, which is also the school my husband teaches at as a K-5 STEM teacher. My older sister and her husband are also teachers at Salt Lake Elementary and Kalihi Uka Elementary, respectively. They have two children who go to Salt Lake Elementary and Moanalua Middle School. My sister-in-law is also a teacher at Waipahu High School. Her and my brother have a 2 year old son.

The current guidelines set forth in the most recent released health and safety guidelines by the Hawaii DOE is unacceptable. Allowing student seating/desks at three feet apart and not requiring face coverings indoors is not an acceptable environment for student, teacher, and staff health. These guidelines also place all of our families at risk.

Teachers, staff, and students must wear face coverings whenever possible, especially indoors. As we've learned through reliable sources since the start of the pandemic, viruses are widely spread through nose and mouth projections. Teachers are speaking and projecting non-stop throughout the day. Students are pushed everyday to engage in collaborative conversation, to debate, and to share ideas as part of their learning experience. Without these interactions, the quality of learning will be lacking. Therefore, having the six feet and face coverings in that environment is much safer during this unstable time.

The notion that teachers and students wearing face coverings would cause more anxiety amongst students is debatable. When a pandemic is raging throughout the world, anxiety about contracting the disease far outweighs the worry that teachers wearing a mask may or may not cause anxiety among our students. I believe that teachers are incredibly capable of creating a safe environment for our students even while our nose and mouths may be hidden. Public school teachers are incredibly resourceful and will find a way to compensate for the lack of facial expression being hidden. We are trained to use our eyes, our voices, and our body language to convey clear messages to our students. Give us the opportunity to show others how a positive learning environment can still be done while taking common sense precautions to keep ourselves, students, staff, and families safe during this pandemic. Reassure our students and families that we are reopening schools with their safety and health at the forefront.

Hawaii's numbers of COVID-19 contractions and deaths are far lower in comparison to our population compared to most other places in our country. We can attribute that to our unique community's willingness to social distance and wear face coverings. As our public schools become one of the first in our country to reopen, we must continue to follow these reliable practices in order to keep our community safe.

Do not allow Hawaii's public school system to be a cautionary tale for the rest of the country. Hawaii public schools can be pioneers in creating safe learning spaces during this unprecedented time.

As a proud mother and a Hawaii public school teacher, I implore the DOE and BOE to revise the guidelines to have student desks/seating at 6 feet apart and require face coverings indoors at all possible times throughout the school day.

Humbly,
Jennifer F. Reale

Gmail

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

Covid-19

Brian Hartsfield <daddzmangolf@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: kkerr@hsta.org

Dear BOE,

Why are teachers and students being held to higher risk standards than other industries and agencies? How can you justify putting our lives at risk like we matter less….especially with Covid on the rise again? Honestly, I don't even understand why we should putting so many at risk by having the students return to campus if Covid is not under control.

As a teacher who happens to be in the high risk category, I want nothing more than to return to the classroom and be with our students, but not at the cost of risking my life, theirs, and all of those we come in contact with. It would cause a devastating domino effect that could and should be avoided at all cost. Instead, we should be focusing more on ways to enhance distance learning until the mortality rate associated with Coving is in control.

It will be too late to adjust once lives are unnecessarily lost. That will be something that cannot be given back to any family having to cope and deal with such a loss. I know it must be easy to sit in a board room more than 6ft. apart, or safely attend a virtual meeting making these decisions….especially when you are not the one that will be put at risk. This is not the Spirit of Aloha that is the foundation for our great state and I am ashamed that you think so lowly of me, our teachers, our students, and the community at large. We already have almost entire families testing positive for Covid, I guess you want to add almost entire classes to that list.

Are you looking at acceptable loss and rolling the dice at our expense…hoping for the best?

We already have a shortage of teachers and now this. Who is going to fill in for us if we start getting hospitalized and dying? Who would want to….nobody! So how is this a good decision?

How are you going to console a family that loses their child because of the situation they were put in. You're not,...you're just gonna look at it as another data point to evaluate because theirs no connection for you, whereas the teachers, staff, classmates and families are left grieving in torment.

If people start getting sick and dying, the decision will be made for you because nobody will come to school anyway. It'll be shut down as it should have been at the onset, yet lives will be lost for no just reason.

It's not an easy decision to keep students at home, but it is the right one if teacher and student safety is truly the intent. Like I said earlier, do the right thing and invest in distance learning instead of forcing teachers and students into a high risk situation. The sooner we are able to effectively incorporate distance learning the better off we'll be. It's a step in the right direction and we'll be that much better prepared for the next pandemic or emergency situation we encounter.

Sincerely,

Brian Hartsfield 10069290

Gmail

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

Testimony

merley@hawaii.rr.com <merley@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:39 PM
Reply-To: merley@hawaii.rr.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Greetings!

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

I am an English teacher at Kalanianaole Elementary and Intermediate School, located on Hawaii Island. As a 30+ year full-time teacher with an additional 7.5 years as a part-time English Learner (formerly English as a Second Language or bilingual education) teacher, I am appalled that the Department of Education is not heeding guidelines for distancing as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding as well as in accordance with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. I am 64 years old, going on 65 in a couple of months AND I am one of two caregivers for my 94 (going on 95)-year-old mother. I LOVE teaching, and although I am eligible to retire based on years of service and age, I want to continue to be in the classroom, but I have second thoughts about doing that, knowing that the Department of Education is willing to compromise my health and wellbeing for business as usual. In fact, it looks as though the Department of Education wants me to be the one nailing my mother's coffin shut or my husband's or my sister's or even my own coffin because we are all 60+.

Our principal took information about the square footage of our classrooms and determined that all of us teachers can accommodate all of our students at the same time with three feet distance. He did not take into consideration that I teach in a former home economics room that is configured with 4 kitchens, which means there are countertops and cupboards jutting out and space for a stove in each kitchen. I don't have a rectangular classroom. I use the sinks in the kitchen to have students wash their hands because hand sanitizer is a commodity and liquid soap is easier to obtain. If I seat students in the kitchen areas, I can't have students line up there to wash their hands without compromising the health of those seated there. I also have built-in book shelves that span 3/4 of the width of the room, separating my desk area from the rest of the classroom area. If students sit where my desk is and face the same direction as everyone else, they won't be looking at my TV monitor, they'll be staring at wall cabinets. How much learning goes on when you're staring at wall cabinets?

Furthermore, even if students are seated three feet apart and facing the same direction, who are they facing? ME!!! Most of us do not teach from the back of the room and talk to the back of our students' heads; we face the students so we can tell whether or not they are comprehending so that we can adjust instruction. Having students three feet apart puts my health and safety as well as my students' health and safety and that of my family and their families, at risk.

Board members, PLEASE ask the Department of Education to reconsider the three feet distance between students in favor of six feet so that I can continue to teach students safely.

Thank you.

Merle Yoshida, Teacher
Kalanianaole Elem. & Inter. School

Karen Kohagura, Elementary Teacher at Pahoa Elementary School

General Business Meeting on Thursday, July 9, 2020

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for the Reopening of Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

I have read the "Hawaii State Department of Education Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan Health & Safety Handbook". I am very concerned about two areas: Social and Physical Distancing and Wear a Face Covering or Mask.

Under Social and Physical Distancing, the handbook states "Maintain a distance of at least three feet between seats, including group tables, if students are facing the same direction". First, the Memorandum of Understanding between Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) and State of Hawaii Board of Education states "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, hallways, and exterior school grounds whenever possible;" Second, the three feet distance is not far enough for me in a classroom or any enclosed area. I am in a high-risk group because of my age (68 years old). My husband is more high-risk than me because of his age (74 years old) and his health (mainly high blood pressure and diabetes). I absolutely do not want to be exposed to COVID-19 in school and bring it home to my husband.

Under Wear a Face Covering or Mask, the handbook states, "In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask." This is absolutely unacceptable for the health and safety of the students and teacher. There will be at least 10 or more students in a classroom setting. These students come from 10 or more different families. Some of them live in an extended family situation and some are homeless. Therefore, the health and safety of the students and teacher within a cohort or bubble is a fallacy.

Furthermore, it is nearly impossible for children not to turn and face each other in a classroom or any other environment. It is natural for them to turn and talk to each other, cough, and sneeze. Therefore, maintaining six (6) feet for social and physical distancing and wearing a face mask is essential for the health and safety of our keiki and the teachers who teach them.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my testimony.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nikka Takane <nikka.takane@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
My name is Nikka Takane and I am currently a Kindergarten Teacher at Waiakea Elementary in Hilo. Reading about how the State wants to allow only 3 feet of space in between children upsets and worries me about this upcoming year. Why would we not listen to the CDC or health organizations with the information that they provide? This pandemic is a very serious one, and we can definitely learn something from the mainland where states reopened too quickly and had to backtrack and shut back down.

Also reading about how masks can be taken off if students are working in small groups within the same classroom. That is just ridiculous!!! I cannot agree with that on any level. If we are required to wear masks in public to keep everyone safe and healthy, why would I feel it is okay to take them off in my own classroom. The DOE keeps referring to each classroom as a "cohort" but while this may be true in school, it cannot be compared to a family unit at home. I do not control where my students go after they leave school or who they may come into contact with after school hours. Masks should be worn at all times, regardless of age or school. Masks have been proven to keep people safe throughout this pandemic we need to protect ourselves, students, and our own families. Many of us go home to elderly people at the end of the day, we cannot risk bringing home anything and putting them in harm's way.

My brother will be a senior in high school this year and I worry for him when he needs to return to school. These guidelines are not keeping anyone's health or safety in mind.

Thank you!
Nikka Takane

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

Testimony

Jennie Matsuda <jennie.matsuda@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:42 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 Jennie Matsuda and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Mililani 'Ike Elementary and my child will be attending Mililani Middle School.

I do not agree with the 3 feet distancing and no masks required in the classroom. There is growing evidence that Covid-19 has mutated and is now more infectious. Furthermore, 239 scientists are urging the World Health Organization to address the airborne transmission of Covid-19. They state that the virus can still spread through tiny respiratory droplets, and that crowded or poorly ventilated indoor settings are dangerous and can lead to "superspreading" incidents. There are also rising numbers of cases of child care centers where children and staff are testing positive. Some children have even died.

These are some of the resources (with links) that I have used to form my opinion on the matter:

This coronavirus mutation has taken over the world. Scientists are trying to understand why

Scientists urge WHO to address airborne spread of coronavirus

Texas coronavirus cases top 1,300 from child care facilities alone

More than 11,000 children test positive for coronavirus in Florida

New York City Says 100 Children Have Rare Syndrome Tied to Covid-19

COVID and kids: A new inflammatory syndrome poses safety challenge for schools, day care

As the data suggests, having a classroom full of students, without masks and only 3 feet apart is asking teachers and students to sacrifice their health and possibly their lives. If schools go forward with this plan, we are asking for trouble, not only in our

schools, but in our community. Students go home to their families - and oftentimes, to their grandparents. Even if each class stays in their "class bubbles," we do not know what precautions each family is taking. We are exposing ourselves to each other's "bubbles." I surely do not wish for Hawaii to be on national news - due to our poor decisions on keeping students and staff "safe."

As a parent, I am hesitant to send my child (with a heart condition) to school, knowing she may be sitting in a classroom full of students not wearing masks and seated closely to each other. I know of other parents across the state that do not want to send their children to school for the same reasons. I have contemplated the idea of quitting my job to stay at home to homeschool my daughter.

Please, I implore you to look at the data and make decisions that puts everyone's health and safety first. We should follow the CDC Guidelines on 6 feet distancing, and we should *encourage* students to wear masks in the classroom. Please think about the welfare of ALL.

Teachers want to return to the classroom. We want to teach our students. But we cannot teach if we are sick. Students cannot learn if they are sick. Positive cases in schools mean more positive cases in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Jennie Matsuda

Gmail

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

No safety no school

Yi Gu <echo850113@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:44 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

Our five year old daughter will be attending kindergarten this year, but it's worrisome knowing the DOE is not following in CDC Guideline of 6 ft apart at school during this unprecedented time! We have baby and senior parents at home living with us, and we can't not afford to risk anyone's life. There should not be school when there is broad community spread from first place, not to mention no detailed safety measures for schools to follow to ensure the safety of the kids and their staffs. Please reconsider having online classes available for families who choose to educate online, and strictly follow CDC guidelines for kids who need to attend class in person.

Echo Gu

Mahalo and Live Aloha
Echo

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nicole Yoshida <nicolennyoshida@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:46 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

- Name with position/title and organization:

  Nicole Yoshida, SpEd Teacher, DOE - King Kaumualii Elementary School

- Meeting:

  BOE Meeting

- Agenda item:

  Mask Rules and 3ft/6ft Distancing

- Position:

  I support wearing masks full-time in school, as per CDC guidelines. I also support 6 foot distancing in school, per CDC guidelines.

Gmail

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

Students should wear masks!!

Tokilupe Havea <tokidoki2lu@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Tokilupe Havea. My daughter goes to Wahiawa Middle School. Please mandate masks at school!!! It makes no sense. Why are you putting our family at risk? I can understand younger kids not wearing them all day. But the older kids should.

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

2020-2021 School year

Richard Kusumoto <rsgmk@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:47 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Ladies &Gentlemen,

Before even considering bringing back the students, please reconsider what is happening currently. People all over the nation have forgotten the mandate of using a face mask to curve the corona vIrus. As a result, the second wave will be worst. Marching for human rights, unconstitutional rights and rioting, resulting in major concern about public health.

Until there is a vaccine for this enemy, serious matters are at hand. Do not take chances, be extra cautious on what you decide to do about reopening our public schools. 6 feet separation is great, 3 feet is asking for trouble.

Remember, if any child contacts the virus in school, the burden on that family and all other attendee.

Wait, don't rush and be safe. You have supplemented options for classes previously, do the same until be can control this virus.

Thank you,

Concerning Grandparents

Gmail

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

testimony

Bryan Guzman <bkguzman67@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: "bkguzman67@yahoo.com" <bkguzman67@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:48 PM

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 Bryan Guzman, parent of a student at Palisades Elementary. For the safety of my family, friends, and state of Hawaii, I urge you hear the CDC's recommendations and space desks at least 6 feet apart. They characterize students who are not spaced apart as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. As a parent, I know my daughter will have a difficult time facing forward all day without turning to a friend. I suspect her 5 and 6 year old classmates will struggle with this too. For the safety of our beautiful state, please think of my daughter and the rest of our keiki. Six feet apart and students must wear a mask all day.

Mahalo, Bryan

Gmail

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

Testimony

Bridgette Beatty <bridgandcharly@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:50 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony for VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan

My name is Bridgette Beatty 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 middle school teacher at Lana'i High and Elementary School.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that school "space seating and desks at least 6 feet apart to reduce the risk". The CDC characterizes students who are “not spaced apart” as being at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. That is what the HSTA advocated for, agreed upon, and 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. 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.

The lack of thoughtfulness and consideration to the safety of staff, students and their families makes me not want to enter the campus or classroom at all this school year. I already homeschool my 13 year old daughter and I am so grateful that is already in place for our family.

Respectfully submitted,
Bridgette

Bridgette Beatty
7th and 8th Grade Mathematics Teacher
Lana'i High and Elementary School
bridgandcharly@yahoo.com

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Alicia Bolosan-Engelman <aleash32@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:52 PM
Reply-To: "aleash32@yahoo.com" <aleash32@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year

I don't understand how the BOE is saying that 3 ft of distance between student desks are enough when we are recommended to be 6 ft apart! There has to be another solution! This is not safe for students and staff! Of course you can make these decisions.... NONE OF YOU ARE IN THE CLASSROOM!

Please make change it to 6 feet to keep everyone safe!

Alicia Engelman

My son attends Pearl City High School.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lena Devery <lenadevery@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:52 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

My name is Lena Devery.
I have one child at Pu'u Kukui Elementary School and another child at Iao Intermediate School. This past year, I worked as an emergency hire biology teacher at Baldwin High School in Wailuku, Maui.

I'm currently completing my teacher certification through iteach.com and was hoping to be hired for the upcoming school year.

COVID-19 has changed that. Upon seeing how how much touching and close interaction happens between students of all grade levels, the re-opening of schools has me very concerned. The new rule of 3ft proposed by the HIDOE violates that of the CDC and jeopardizes the safety of our children, school staff and faculty, our families and the community.

I believe this model is setting up the reopening of Hawaii's schools for failure. This will be further exacerbated by the reopening of the state to mainland travelers come August 1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lena Devery

Gmail

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

Testimony

Noe H <noehelm@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:59 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

From:

Yvette N. Helm

Kualapu'u Elementary Charter School

Moloka'i, HI

I strongly oppose the Hawaii State guidelines of reopening schools with the recommendation of 3ft physical distancing in the classroom!

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 health and safety of our students, staff and families should be a priority when planning guidelines for our communities. A physical distance of 6ft between students should be the minimum for each classroom. Please dont forget that even if the percentage of covid 19 cases are low in children, there is evidence that many are in fact silent carriers of the virus, which then puts our staff and families at a higher risk of being exposed to the virus!

Please make our health and safety a prority! I oppose the guidelines of 3ft physical distancing in the classroom!

Thank you,

Yvette N Helm, Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

A <annapylee@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony
I, Anna Asada a teacher at Kauluwela Elementary is testifying on Discussion item V1(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. For the safety of all I strongly believe in 6 ft. social distancing and wearing of face mask in the classroom. What kind of message are we sending to our community that only when at school this social distancing is not followed as stated by state officials. The COVID cases are rising and if we don't take these necessary safety measures we are not doing our part to show Aloha. Sincerely, Anna Asada

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Aziani Ismail <aismail@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

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

I am a SPED teacher at Volcano School of Arts and Sciences, a public charter school on the Big Island. I believe that with the re-opening of Hawaii schools in August, keeping a distance of 3 feet between students' desks during the Covid-19 pandemic is dangerous as this dramatically increases the chance of spreading pathogens and compromising the safety of our keiki and teachers. The Board of Education should mandate the distance between students' desks to be 6 feet apart.

Mahalo,
Aziani Ismail
Special Education Teacher
Volcano School of Arts and Sciences
99-128, Old Volcano Road, HI 96785

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kathleen Mcangus <kathleen.mcangus@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I am submitting testmony on Discussion item VI (A). I am a teacher at Kainalu Elementary and my child also attends this school. I would like to ask the Board of Education to change the 3ft distance between students to 6ft. This is the recommended distance for the general public, so it should also apply to all students in public schools. I care deeply about the health and safety of my son, family, coworkers and self. By allowing 3ft as the acceptable distance between students, you are jeopardizing the health and safety of our community. I personally choose to follow the 6ft rule and social distance while out in public. If students are allowed back with just 3ft between them, I feel forced to be part of something I don't feel comfortable with. Please take into consideration all who are affected by this decision. There will be no education without teachers. We must keep our teachers safe as well as the larger community. During this global pandemic, health should be the priority.
Aloha,
Kathleen McAngus

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

Nicole McCombs <mrsmccombs@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:56 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Name: Nicole McCombs, VP Lokelani Intermediate, Maui

Agenda Item: DOE Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools

Position:

- It is our moral imperative to educate our children
- All students need to be physically in school.
- Two days of face to face instruction per week is not enough.
- Students are losing precious instructional time every day they are home from school and fall further behind.
- Parents are not substitute teachers and many need to work. In fact, many of our students are physically being put to work during this time (building walls, mixing cement, construction, etc.) instead of being educated in school.
- Social distancing guidelines will be extremely hard to enforce, no matter which model is chosen. Children (and adults) are social creatures and tend to get close proximity to one another.
- Face masks are very hard for anyone (especially children) to correctly wear for the majority of the day. They will not be effective.
- All of us have been in quarantine together for months, we should all be okay to go back to school... until we let visitors back into our islands.
- Educating our keiki is more important than tourism.
- We should all go back physically or go virtual until we can all go back physically. We should be all in or all out. Scheduling is a logistical nightmare, especially for impacted schools.
- There is not enough physical classroom space to prioritize PreK-2 for face to face instruction every day.
- What message does it send to older students about their education if they are rarely allowed to come to school?
- Kids need recess and to play, without masks.

- **Administrators are parents too, how can we do our jobs if we are expected to stay home and educate our own children? Childcare is not available and our young children cannot stay at home alone and "distance learn". We need the option to work virtually a few days a week if we go with Model B or C.**

Mahalo for listening,
Nicole McCombs

Gmail

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

Testimony for July 9th Item VI (A)

Emily Engh <emilysengh@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

As the parent of a child entering his senior year of public high school on Maui, I am horrified that the Board of Education is NOT mandating the use of face masks for all students at all times while on campus. While children may not get as sick from the Corona Virus as older adults, it is still relatively unknown what the long term effects may be on the lungs and the immune system. It also seems beyond obvious that kids will spread it rapidly amongst themselves if they are unmasked at school and will undoubtedly take it home to their parents and grandparents. Similarly, I believe that it will be impossible to keep students from transmitting the virus to their teachers. Can you imagine the mayhem as teachers start to get sick or worse? Who will substitute? No one. Nobody is going to volunteer for that job-- it's practically guaranteed that you'll get Covid-19. I am currently finishing up a class at UHMC where every student as well as the professor has their temperature checked at the door and wears a mask during class (which lasts four hours!) It is not a problem for any of us to do so.
One of the reasons that we have thus far largely escaped Covid-19 is that we have all been diligent in wearing our masks. The other reason is that we have largely kept the virus out of our state. However, as the tourists pour in I suspect our number of infections will soar.
Hawaii is not capable of treating large amounts of sick people. We have a chance to stop it, but only if we are bold and demand that our children take responsibility for the protection of their elders. The kids in Hawaii are used to wearing masks right now, they understand why they're doing it. Let them do their part and be proud of doing it. They will save lives, and when they are our age, they'll look back and know that their small sacrifice made a big difference.

Thank you for your time,

Emily Engh

To Whom It May Concern:

The fact that I am having to write this testimony regarding Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year is absolutely ludicrous. I am disgusted and disappointed by the DOE's decision to ignore the recommended 6ft social distancing guidelines and push for 3ft instead. First off, reopening schools in the first place is an asinine and selfish decision in order to get parents back to work and revitalize the economy. The DOE is not only putting students at risk, but the TEACHERS and FACULTY as well. A good handful (around 40%) of Hawaii's public-school teachers are older and may not be as resilient to the Coronavirus as the students. Also, the DOE states that 3ft is acceptable as long as the students face forward??? How do you intend to ensure that happens 100% of the time? Yes, for middle and high school students this is doable, but for elementary school students??? Students whose ages range from 4-10 years of age? Does the DOE know how children work? It will be nearly impossible to keep a class of 30 four-year-old children facing forward for the entire school day. And if the DOE is so adamant about school reopening and kids sitting 3ft apart from one another, then **why is their very own BOE meeting, averaging the same amount of people as a classroom, being held virtually???** The level of hypocrisy is just disgusting and shows the lack of leadership and competency of the DOE. My entire family is a family of teachers. My mother works at an elementary school and is considered to be in the high-risk category while my brother is a science teacher at a public high school. I am currently living abroad and the stress of constantly worrying about the two of them going back to school and contracting the virus is overwhelming. I am seriously concerned about whether or not I will have a family to return to if they return to school.

If the DOE must (for whatever stupid and selfish reason) reopen schools, then they should at least be smart enough and do so by following the CDC safety guidelines. Just because other states are requiring schools to reopen, doesn't mean Hawaii needs to follow suit. There is such a thing as taking a stand and choosing to make the morally correct decision and not the economically beneficial decision.

Schools really should not be reopening at all (seeing as just the other day there was a 41-case spike) but I hope that this testimony helps the DOE see that their decision of implementing a 3ft social distancing rule is not effective and therefore changes it to the recommended 6ft. I am incredibly disappointed with the DOE and hope they start thinking about the PEOPLE of Hawaii and not just the economy.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Alan Lennard <alan.lennard.808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Ref: 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 for several friends who are teachers and Parents of children at Haleʻiwa Elementary School, Wahiawa Iliahi Elementary and Mililani Middle School.

From Alan Lennard

To the Board:
I concur with HSTA: A mandate that classrooms be configured with six feet between student desks.
It is essential to space students at least 6 feet apart; additionally all students should have face shields to reduce aerosol transmission of covid-19. It should be evident by now that this virus is highly infectious.

Additionally, if the transmission trajectory continues to escalate in Hawai'i; it may be necessary for the State of Hawai'i to phase back ALL activities allowing human to human interaction, including physical attendance at all schools.

Additionally, please adhere to cdc.gov guidance:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

Thank you for your willingness to consider my testimony,

Aloha

Alan Lennard
P.O. Box 818
Haleiwa, HI 96712



IMG_4008.png
360K

Gmail

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

3 feet is not good enough!

Samarra Lehman <samarral1024@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying 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 Samarra Lehman and I have been a teacher for 15 years with the DoE of Hawaii. I have taught both secondary and elementary settings. I currently will be teaching third grade for this upcoming school year at Mauka Lani Elementary School.

I would be the first to say I miss teaching in my classroom. I missed my students this past quarter and hated not getting to see them on a daily basis. As a teacher, I never expected a pandemic would keep me from my classroom and my students. However, I have had friends on the mainland become ill to covid. This virus does not have a cure and can spread rapidly if not taken seriously. With that being said, I am extremely anxious about my school's plans to implement Model A. I am also concerned that our leadership at my school does not feel as though this is serious.

My administrator believes that masks give a 'false sense of security' and therefore chooses not to wear one. He also believes we can fit up to 26 students with a 3 ft distance in each classroom. While it is easy to conceive the idea of furniture being placed in the classroom 3ft apart, I see a few problems that will affect both the safety and impact the learning of my students. Furniture will not touch each other, borrow supplies from each other, sneeze or cough, but when you actually have students in those seats, it is a different story. Unfortunately, our students are not furniture. They will need to get up, move for brain breaks, and given various tiers of understanding, may need to engage in small group instruction.
If our numbers remained 1 or 2 a day I wouldn't feel as uncomfortable with going back, however numbers have been increasing daily and currently have more active cases than when we had closed.

The CDC recommends that seats at restaurants need to be 6ft apart. With the number of students in a room and speed in which this virus can spread we are putting our students, teachers, and community at risk. The ability to ensure that students remain in their seats think that 8 and 9 year olds can remain in their seats and 3ft apart for 6 hrs is ludicrous. It is concerning the risk of 3 ft and that it would take one sick student that could erupt in disaster for my students, their families, our community, my fellow colleagues and even myself.

It is unfortunate that we need to look at conducting business differently. However, the welfare of both students and staff are at stake. If restaurants, bars, and shopping centers are expected to follow safety guidelines of six feet it should be no different for schools.

I am feeling scared because a cold or flu spreads like wildfire in my classroom. I can't imagine if someone came to school infected with COVID, unaware they were affected and how it could impact and devastate our community. While Hawaii has been managing the pandemic successfully things can rapidly change. States like New York and Florida have shown how quickly the virus spreads. It just takes one.

Please take our safety, our concerns and our fears seriously.

Kind Regards,

Samarra Lehman
3rd Grade Teacher
Mauka Lani Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

LAURENCE BEJERANA <lbejerana@me.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Hawaii BOE

My name is Aimee Bejerana and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Mililani Waena Elementary School 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 would like to express my concern about the reopening of schools, in which students will be placed only 3 ft. apart without wearing masks. Under these conditions, I am afraid that I, as well as other students/teachers who have medical conditions, might contract the Coronavirus. I have had asthma since childhood and placing myself, students and teachers in an environment that promotes the spread of a killer virus is not only dangerous, but also very negligent.

Based on nationwide social distancing guidelines by CDC and medical professionals, I strongly believe those recommendations should be applied to classroom settings as well by placing students 6 ft. apart. Students should also be required to wear masks or face shields. This will greatly reduce the possible spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aimee Bejerana

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Jill Igawa <jdigawa@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 9:59 PM

Discussion Item VI(A)
My name is Jill Igawa and I am a teacher at Waiakea Elementary School. I am very concerned about the opening of school and how the DOE is not adhering to CDC guidance. It is appalling that the DOE is willing to jeopardize the health and well being of teachers and students by implementing 3 feet separation instead of 6 feet and stating that mask use is optional in the classroom. What is the DOE priority? Is it to maximize the amount of students in a classroom or to create a safe environment for the school community? As a teacher and mother to 2 children, I am fearful for my health and how I will pose a risk to my family. At this moment, I will either retire or take a leave of absence. It will be disastrous and a huge disruption to the school because it will be very difficult to find qualified substitutes who are capable of working under these conditions and knowledgeable to implement distance learning. I am willing to teach but unwilling to risk my life to COVID exposure .

Michael Wong
P. O. Box 333
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

July 7, 2020

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

Member of the Board of Education:

Subject: **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 student at Maui High School entering senior year this fall. I understand that you are planning to reopen schools with the conditions that students are to be seated three feet apart without requiring the use of masks. This goes against the guidelines set forth by the CDC, who recommend at least six feet of separation between students and staff as well as the use of masks. Indeed, it is well known that adequate social distancing and mask wearing are two simple strategies that mitigate, despite not eliminating altogether, transmission of this virus.

As a student, I am deeply concerned about the consequences this would bring about, as schools are perfect breeding grounds for this virus. Education is of utmost importance to me, but not at the expense of the health and safety of myself, my fellow students, and teachers/faculty. We have seen throughout the nation the consequences of premature re-openings without adequate precautions – many grieving family members and medical workers can testify to that.

I understand the difficult circumstances under which this board is being asked to construct a plan and deal with many factors that are outside of their immediate control. However, given the risks invited by the current plan, I am strongly testifying against the proposed three feet spacing of student desks with no requirement for masks and ask that the board formulate a plan that conforms to the guidelines set by the CDC.

Sincerely,

Michael Wong

Michael Wong

Gmail

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

testimony

Robyn Tasaka <rtasaka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am emailing 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 Robyn Tasaka, and I work in higher education. My children attend Waiau Elementary School.

I am writing to express my concerns with the reopening of schools. As a parent who also holds a full-time job, I understand the need for schools to reopen, but I also have huge concerns about safety. While it is important that parents be able to work in order to support themselves and their families, it is most important that we protect the health of all--children, teachers and other school employees, and the community at large.

Parents must be given an option to keep children home and be provided with supplemental materials whether online or paper. Safe face-to-face options must also be provided so that students have an opportunity to learn and grow. Safe face-to-face options must follow the best known information currently available, for example, with regards to face coverings, 6' distancing, limiting people in indoor spaces, sanitation, and hygiene.

I understand as well that teachers, school employees, and school administration are under tremendous pressure, but I believe that there are solutions that can support all of us. This article, "Schools: What's it going to take?" by Emily Oster is one that I feel seriously considers necessary issues and provides creative solutions that support parents, students, teachers, and the community.

I also want to support teachers and other school employees who are not comfortable with face-to-face instruction in our current climate. I believe that many families will want online instruction. Can school resources be pooled and leveraged in a way that maximizes impact? For example, my children attend the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. Could one team state wide offer online Hawaiian Language Immersion instruction for all students statewide who want to learn remotely? Perhaps similar approaches could work for special education and other programs.

Robyn Tasaka, Ph.D.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Donna Yamamoto <donnayamamoto17@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Donna Yamamoto and I am a counselor at Moanalua High School. I have worked in the DOE for the past 25 years. My daughter went through the public school system, graduated from Moanalua High School and is now a sophomore at the University of Southern California and my son is a junior at Moanalua High School.

As a counselor, my primary concern for all of my students is their physical and emotional safety and well-being. I want all students to learn to be productive and knowledgeable contributors to society. Schools not only teach academics. Schools model and give students the opportunity to learn and practice how to work and communicate with one another.

Everyone wants schools to open and for students to be back at school full-time. However, it is irresponsible to have students in classrooms with their desks 3 feet apart when you go to any store, business office, or public place on the island and the restrictions call for social distancing of at least 6 feet. What kind of message are we sending our students and parents when we tell them that schools don't adhere to the same rules as every other public place in the state?

In addition to this, Mayor Caldwell has made it mandatory for people to wear face coverings in all public places, but the Department of Education is "encouraging" students to wear masks? Teachers are expected to make it their "classroom rule"? There are many staff members, parents and students that will not feel safe or comfortable being in classrooms with students who are not wearing face coverings.

Please make clear guidelines and send a clear message: our students' and school staff's safety and well-being is of primary concern. Keep everyone safe! Mandate that classrooms adhere to the 6-feet social distancing guidelines and make wearing face masks required for all students.

Sincerely,
Donna Yamamoto
phone 808-542-2191

Gmail

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

Testimony

Keri Reese Billings <kerireesebillings@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Evening,

My name is Keri Billings. I am a teacher at Wai'anae 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 am asking that we keep the 6-foot requirement and mask requirement to ensure the safety of our teachers and Kids. As we have seen throughout the country and have heard from experts, the primary spread to the COVID-19 virus spreads when a person breathes in droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Keeping 6ft apart and wearing a mask, helps to slow the spread of this contagious disease. We are in unusual times and need to err on the side of caution- STICK TO THE 6ft/wear mask RULES.

Thank you! Stay safe

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sanoe Ilaoa <silaoa7407@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:03 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:
>
> I am writing to testify in regards to Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation in Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.
>
> I am Sanoe' Eselu-Ilaoa, a stay at home mother with 6 children, whom attend August Ahrens Elementary School in Waipahu. As I understand, August Ahrens is the biggest elementary school in the state. To hear that schools will be opened back up come August was very surprising, to say the least.
>
> Why are we not following the CDC's guidelines to have our kids 6ft. apart? And masks will not be required to be worn by the kids or staff? 3ft. distancing in the classroom will not cut it. Everywhere we go - supermarkets, stores, the post office, the beach .. they all require 6ft. distance. They all require masks. So why are we not following those same guidelines in our classrooms?? I'm extremely disappointed that the safety of our children and teachers are not more of a priority! I have four of my six children at August Ahrens Elementary. I cannot afford to have any of them coming home with the virus and spreading it to their siblings, to us (their parents) or their grandparents, who also live with us. And we all know the older ones - our kupuna - are most susceptible to COVID-19.
>
> A different approach must be taken; I implore you to please keep the schools closed at least until the cases subside. We've seen a spike in cases since we've opened everything back up! What ever happened to the DOE's decision to not open up schools UNTIL there are NO COVID-19 cases for 4 full weeks? For the safety of our children, teachers, kupuna... PLEASE reconsider opening schools until these cases subside and we can flatten the curve again.
>
> So many other parents that I'm speaking with are looking at different homeschooling options for this school year because it's just too much of a risk to send our kids to school. Personally, my children are my number one priority and they are definitely NOT worth the risk. PLEASE reconsider opening the schools back up. Push back the opening if anything. Figure out a plan to do distance learning instead. There are soooo many other ways (much safer ways) to do this.
>
> The health and safety of our people are the most important. PLEASE reconsider and try to work on other proposals or plans that might be a better (Safer) fit for our children returning to school.
>
> Thank you so much for your time. I really do appreciate it.
>
> Aloha,
>
> Sanoe' Eselu-Ilaoa
> Email: Silaoa7407@gmail.com
> Cell: #(808) 366-3693
>
> Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sharon Fukayama <sharonfukayama@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:05 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 2020-2021 school year.

Sharon Fukayama
Hahaione Elementary School

Classrooms should be configured with six feet between student desks.

Gmail

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

Testimony

M Guris <mkyguris@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:06 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.

It is imperative for the health and safety for all stakeholders to adhere to the CDC’s recommendation of maintaining 6 feet apart at all times at school. I am a teacher at Wheeler Elementary School and a mother whose sons attend Kanoelani Elementary School. I need reassurances that my sons and I will be safe.

Thank you for your attention,

Mallika Yoshitake-Guris

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mel O <melmobayashi@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:10 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 Melissa Obayashi and I teach at Pauoa Elementary.

Dear Board of Education,

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns about the DOE's plan.

Teachers are all eager to get back in the classroom and start the new school year. However, 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

Sheryl lynn Kawahakui almeida <almeidas5@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:11 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 Sheryl Almeida and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Waialua High & Intermediate School, where my son also attends.

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, keeping students from hugging and touching each other is almost impossible to prevent. They feel inclined to share their things and will reach out for each other if the opportunity arises.

At our school, normal class sizes can average 25+ students. It is unrealistic to think teachers and students are safe with only 3ft of distancing between them all day. Children will not stay put, and much time will be wasted managing behaviors. As teachers, we are most familiar with student behaviors in the classroom and know that kids cannot sit still for long periods of time and will get up to move around or attempt to touch their friends or the desks of others if they can reach them.

Another concern I have is that my degree is not in medicine or any type of health profession. I do not feel I should be responsible for visually assessing my students when they come to class. What if I miss something? Does it then become my fault when others are exposed to a sick child. If we are to be placed in charge of such a task, then I strongly feel that all teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometers to do temperature checks for our students, as like employees reporting to work, all students should be checked before even entering the school so as to not expose so many others on their way to class.

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. Schools cannot make any mistakes and put our children and teachers at risk. I care about my child’s education, but his safety is my #1 priority. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting everyone at risk.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Almeida
Waialua High & Intermediate School
67-160 Farrington Highway
Waialua, HI. 96791
(808) 307-2400

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

debbie tanaka <terryanddeb@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:14 PM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

STRONG Disagreement with the Hawaii Department of Education's decision to re-open schools with students sitting only 3 feet apart. The BOE should mandate that classroom desks be no less than 6 feet apart, and that masks must be worn, with exceptions for health reasons.
Thank you.

Terry and Debbie Tanaka
Private Citizens

Sent from my iPhone

Quinton Wong
P. O. Box 333
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

July 7, 2020

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

Member of the Board of Education:

Subject: **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 student at Maui High School who will be entering my senior year this fall. I understand that you are planning to reopen schools with the conditions that students are seated three feet apart without requiring the use of masks. This strongly goes against the guidelines set forth by the CDC, who recommend at least six feet of separation between students and staff as well as the use of masks. As a student directly impacted by this decision, I am deeply concerned about the potential consequences this would bring about, as these conditions encourage the spread of the COVID-19 virus. My education is beyond important to me, but not at the expense of me and my fellow students' and teachers' health and safety. It is because of this that I am testifying against this proposed three feet spacing of student desks with no requirement for masks.

Sincerely,

Quinton Wong

Quinton Wong

Gmail

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

testimony

tracie koide <koide65@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): presentation on DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for 2020-2021 SY.

My name is Tracie Koide and I'm a teacher at Campbell High School. I have multiple concerns and issues regarding the plan on reopening schools. I agree that face to face instruction is the best for learning and I'm all for it even during the this pandemic IF SPECIFIC PRECAUTIONS ARE IN PLACE WHICH THEY ARE NOT!

1. Students should be required to wear a mask...I understand specific groups of SpEd students and younger students will have trouble with masks, but masks and social distancing are the best way to stop the spread.

2. 6ft. social distancing should be followed no matter what especially within the classroom. If we need to stand in lines 6ft apart for at most a few minutes, then we shouldn't be seating students anything less than 6ft apart since they will be sitting in a classroom for over an hour.

3. Just because my students aren't showing symptoms, I don't know if someone in their household is sick, has recently travelled, or has tested positive for covid-19. How can we protect ourselves if we don't know especially when we cannot require masks and possibly having students sitting less than 6ft apart.

4. Many of my co-workers are high risk people or live with high risk people, I am concerned about them coming to work all together. More flexibility for them and all of us a whole should be more available.

Sincerely,
Tracie Koide

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jayson Kramer <jayson.kramer@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Jayson Kramer and I teach at Radford 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.

One of the lessons I have learned during this pandemic is that the reason we follow the health guide lines from our leaders is more about others than myself. The leaders are telling us to wear a mask and social distance 6ft. away from others because it helps stop the spread of COVID-19. I follow these guidelines because I don't want to bring the disease into my house where my children, my 3 year old daughter and 3 month old son, would become sick. If we are being told to wear a mask and social distance 6ft. from others in public places; why wouldn't we be doing that in the classroom? Also, the University of Hawaii students will be social distancing 6ft apart. Why wouldnt high school students be doing the same? Not doing those two things not only puts the teachers in danger but the students as well.

I hope to see everyone in the class wearing masks and social distancing next school year.

Mahalo,

Jayson Kramer

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Michael DePolis <michaeldepolis@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:18 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.

According to the CDC, three feet distancing will not be safe and is not acceptable. Face masks should be worn at all times at schools.

Thank you,
Michael DePolis
Ho'okele Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony on Discussion VI(A)

David Engelman <david_engelman@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing on behalf of Discussion item VI(A) Presentation on DOEs Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021.

My son is currently attending Pearl City High School. I am not comfortable the Board of Education is making adequate accommodations to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Currently we are less than 30 days from start of the school year and the only feedback we have received about the 2020-2021 school year had to deal with Project Grad! And my son is not even a Senior for another two years!

I am concerned with the minimum 3 feet separation rule and the lack of temperature checks. It has been my experience that parents send their kids to school sick on a regular basis. Give them tylenol and out the door.... What training is being given to Staff Members to combat this pandemic? Most schools have 1 “Health Nurse” for the entire school or none at all. How is that one nurse supposed to evaluate the entire school each day?

Given the most recent rise in COVID cases across the state. 3 FEET IS NOT ENOUGH! This clearly goes against the 6ft requirement we have been given to date from local, State, and Federal mandates.

How dare the BOE assume the risk for Me and my family without having discussed it with Parents and Guardians. Before you make 3 feet the minimum, how about you explain to the family how this is going to work with 1000s of kids going back to school in less than 30 days.

I do not plan to send my kid to school until we have received a detailed plan of action vetted by the Parents and Guardians.

Please vote no on 3 feet distancing for our Keiki! Recommend creating a Task Force that includes Parents and Guardians.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at (808) 208-7281.

Vr, Dave

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jeannine Gomez <jeannine_gomez@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:19 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 have two children that attend Waiakea Elementary School and I do not believe that allowing a three foot distance between children in the classroom is a wise idea. The CDC guideline for every other circumstance/scenario is a minimum of six foot distance between people.

Why should our children, who will already have an extremely difficult time socially distancing themselves from their friends, be put in a situation where they could literally reach over and make contact with their classmate? What or who is going to stop them from doing so? The teacher? The teacher will have so many things to worry about already and watching for kids that are reaching over to touch their neighbor should not be one of them.

The Department of Education needs to seriously reconsider this erroneous decision and mandate a six foot distance between children in classrooms.

This is a very sad, unfortunate circumstance that we are all in but doing everything we can to help mitigate, and ultimately eliminate, COVID-19 should be our number one priority.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,
Jeannine Gomez
Concerned parent

Sent from Outlook Mobile

Gmail

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

Testimony for 6ft mandate

Desmond Yap <dezmanhawaii@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:20 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a teacher and I also have 4 keiki that will be returning back to school. With today's press conference about the rising cases of Covid-19 and speaking with other parents I believe that a mandated 6ft social distancing in the classroom is crucial to keep the Corona Virus under some sense of control as we cautiously open our schools.
3ft is to risky and cutting it close. Please, use wisdom in this and take our time with what we are doing.

Mahalo nui,

Desmond Yap

Testimony

Scott Saiki <ssaiki@mules.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am 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 Scott Saiki and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Leilehua High School.

As a teacher, I do not feel that 3 feet distancing for students in class or making mask wearing optional are policies that place the safety of our students, teachers, and families as a priority. It is common knowledge that droplets expelled by coughs and sneezes travel much greater distances than 3 feet. Anyone that has spent anytime in a classroom with students knows requiring students to sit facing the same direction for the entire instructional period is unrealistic. They turn, move, and interact with each other even when they are told not to. If in-person instruction is important than mask wearing should be mandatory in the classroom setting. There is no plan, such as plexiglass shields to protect a teacher from the exhalation of several unmasked students. The lack of these precautions is most concerning.

I also feel that better procedures should be put in place to detect if staff and students have a fever and may be infectious. If medical facilities, with trained staff, use no contact thermometers to test before entry; how can we possibly depend on untrained staff to visually try to determine if someone has a fever.

I am just shy of 60 and fall into one of the high-risk groups. I have been teaching for 31 years and hope to be teaching for a few more. I enjoy interacting with my students and wish that we could open the school year like a pre COVID-19 year, but all the wishing in the world will not end the pandemic before the school year starts. I hope that when the pandemic is over that none of our school community has died or became infected due to inadequate safety procedures. I trust that you will act in the best health interest of all students and staff.

Sincerely,
Scott Saiki
Chemistry Teacher
Leilehua High School

Testimony

Ashleigh Payne <alohaash@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a parent and teacher, I am concerned with sending my child to school given the 3 ft. Parameters, AND leniency on mask wearing. If the country is going to recover, we need to focus on preventative measures. If our state is not willing to make decisions on the side of caution, we are likely going to spread the virus and may need to shut down schools again. Students are often going to need reminders and a strong foundation of healthy and safety rituals- it puts all of us in jeopardy to start the year in such a way. I can see that if cases decline, we may take on these measures. However, remember in 4th quarter, we were not going back to school and work sites if there were cases in a two week window, why would we allow weak parameters for our collègues and children when that isn't the case now?

Let's not roll the dice with our health and safety. Our children, our staff, our families, as well as the community depend on our department to make the right decisions, because you affect all of our lives.

Thank you for your time,
Ashleigh Milani

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sherrie Knopp <sweetpea808@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:21 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 2020-2021 School Year.

I understand that making sure that students receive their education in these times of Covid19 is truly challenging. It is hard not only for teachers, students, and school staff, but also for parents. However, we need to remember that what's most important is the health and safety of all those involved. Without that, the situation may become worse. That is a scary thought.

I am asking you to please honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks. Yes, that means possibly having all classes on a rotating schedule of some type. But as we are asked to follow safety guidelines (social distancing of at least 6 feet) in the rest of our daily life, why would those involved in the school setting be seen as not worthy of that concern as well? That is just not right.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sherrie Knopp
Grade 1 Teacher
Barbers Point Elementary School

Gmail

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

During Covid-19 reopen school

Iris Ruan <irisruan1989@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:25 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sir or Madam,

Aloha!

I am a parent who is concerned about school reopening in August with Covid-19.

With the Protest and Business reopen, the Covid-19 is increasing tremendously.

The cases number from news on July:
7/1 9 cases
7/2 20 cases
7/3 29 cases
7/4 24 cases
7/5 25 cases
7/6 7 cases
7/7 41 cases

.....
And doctors in Hawaii are expecting more cases after the July 4th party.

These numbers are even more than April and May.
In my opinion, we could let kids back to school at least 40 days in a single number.
Before that, I would like to let my kids have the online classes.
Even if when school starts after 40 days in a single number , a six foot distance should be setup for kids classes and reduce kids number in classroom.

Please consider these suggestions before you reopen the schools.
Kids immunization systems are weaker than adults, and it is very hard to force every kid to follow the social distance and health procedures.

Sincerely,

A very nervous mom with two kids.

Iris

Gmail

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

Social distancing in school

Kent Yamaguchi <kent_yamaguchi@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kent Yamaguchi. I am a counselor. My main concern at this time is not 6feet vs 3feet. I believe none of that matters if students and teachers are not required to wear masks in the classroom. “Recommended” does not mean “mandatory”. This is much more of a concern to me I feel if everyone is wearing a mask, 3 feet, 4 feet, 5 feet, 6 feet can be worked out.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Denise Gima <dakagi2@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:30 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 Denise Gima and I am a teacher at Wailuku Elementary School. I am also a mother of two sons who attend Maui High School.

I am in favor of 6 feet social distancing in the classroom. The number of COVID cases has been going up daily and this is concerning our government officials and the DOH. They have been stating that it is very important that the public remember to wear their face masks and to maintain social distancing of 6 feet. So why is this not necessary for students and teachers in a classroom setting? I am very concerned about how this could affect my students and their families, my own family, my aging parents, and myself since I am considered to be in the "high risk" category.

Please consider what is best for the health and safety of our keiki, families, and staff.

Thank you.

Gmail

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

Aloha

jenni fuller <jennifllr@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

On behalf of our Ohana thank you for all you do for our children and community.
In regards to Re-opening schools specifically elementary, we have seen that it will be a 2 days a week schedule in class and the rest at home. I understand we have major rules and regulations with the covid pandemic but what are families suppose to do that have businesses to run and jobs to Attend to, to be able to keep a roof over our heads so we can have a home to school in!
We have some of the lowest cases on the Big Island with no fatalities thank god. And the government is not handing out any money to help us. We are in a serious panic. One of us is a single parent with no family here to help and no time to home school in order to keep their jobs/businesses open to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.
Mainland schools are opening full time end of August?!
The bars and restaurants are open. The mall is open?!
We absolutely need full time school!! Even if it was half days for a while. Our children are already way behind and our autistic son is getting nothing per education for now. There has to be a solution. More funding, more teachers , create jobs, give our children the education they desperately need and help us return to our work otherwise we will be in a very very bad situation with a stable living situation not making income and not being able to homeschool our kids?!
We are so grateful for all you do but there has to be a better solution for the community especially on the Big Island. We have very very low cases. We are in a panic!
Mahalo for your time And dedication. 🙏

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

su teva <sarongshawaii@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please re think this
Mahalo S. Var, hilo Hawaii



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76K

Gmail

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

Testimony

Pamela Wilson <pandmwilson@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, my name is Pamela Wilson and I am a Special Education Teacher at Kalanianaole School on the Big Island in Papaikou. I would like to provide testimony on Discussion Item VI (A): Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. In order to keep everyone safe as we reopen the schools we need to make sure we are practicing appropriate social distancing of 6 feet and wearing a mask throughout the school day, especially when indoors such as a classroom. When looking at information about this virus from multiple sources that are based in Science and facts, social distancing of 6 feet and wearing a mask especially when indoors helps to limit exposure to this virus. Also, in the State of Hawaii, this guidance is required to enter public buildings and places of business to keep everyone safe. Aren't schools considered public spaces? So, why aren't we following the same guidance?

Currently there is strong scientific evidence supporting that COVID - 19 is mainly spread through the air, because it is an airborne virus. This makes social distancing of 6 feet or more and wearing a mask in the classroom even more crucial. Please do not sacrifice the health and safety of our students and teachers, with ill-informed guidance of allowing only 3 feet of distance and saying students do not need to wear masks in the classroom.

As a Special Education Teacher I do understand that there might be circumstances in which mask wearing or 6 feet of distance might not be feasible based on a student's disability or medical needs. This should then be handled on an individual case by case basis involving the parent and team members to ensure that whatever plan is decided still protects all as best as possible. Let the Hawaii DOE be a model for our students, community, State, and Nation on reopening our schools safely, using factual and Science based guidelines.

Sincerely,
Pam Wilson

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristiann Endow <ekristiann@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kristiann Endow, a grade 5 teacher at Palisades 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.

As an Elementary school teacher, I totally understand that we are the foundations for all areas and it is integral for student learning. However, having us teach a full classroom of 25-30 students, following a 3 foot guidance of physical distancing is completely unacceptable. It has been stated that as long as the students are facing forward, they don't need to wear their masks, but that contradicts everything that is being stated on the news, locally and globally. There has been a dramatic spike in positive COVID-19 cases as a result from people not following the proper guidelines and recommendations. People in our community have been letting their guard down and have not been wearing their masks nor have they been social distancing. If adults can't even follow these guidelines, what's going to make our students want to follow the guidelines? Our community is setting a horrible example for our Keiki and their negative influence will impact their child's poor lifestyle choices.

By exposing ourselves to a large number of students each day, this puts us, teachers, in the high risk category. You don't hear frequent reports of children contracting COVID, but more so the young and older adults. Can you imagine what would happen if a teacher was to contract the virus? First of all, it's hard enough to find a substitute, let alone a decent substitute. Equally important, a lot of our substitutes are retired teachers. I can just imagine how much more of a substitute shortage we will be in this year, because who in their right mind would even feel comfortable subbing when they are in the high risk category?!

Likewise, if you make us go back to teaching while only following a 3 foot physical distance, I will highly reconsider even going back into the teaching profession because I cannot afford to expose myself to a large group of people who are "outside" of my household. I recently had a baby and I am very concerned about his health. His immune system is still developing and I cannot put him at risk for contracting this virus. I also live with my sister who has an auto-immune disease (Systemic Lupus) and it takes her double the time to recover as opposed to an average individual. When we were in elementary school, I was in 5th grade and she was in 2nd when she got really sick. She ended up in the hospital and the doctors had to run so many tests on her to figure out what was wrong. I was only 10 years old but I remember every day so vividly and I never want to experience that again. It was heartbreaking to see a loved one go through so much pain and agony, which is why I will quit teaching if it comes down to it. My family's health and safety is my first priority and no one will ever be able to put a price on that.

Therefore, all I ask is that you highly reconsider the physical distancing to 6 feet, and have a change of heart for our loved ones. We don't know when our last days on Earth will be, therefore we have to do everything that we can control to ensure that we have those days to spend and come home to our family.

Thank you,
Kristiann Endow

Gmail

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

Testimony

Gina Gatanis <ginaaloha@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:38 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I do not wish to arrange my student desks 3 feet apart. They should be 6 feet like all other public places.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jessy Shiroma <jessy_kimi47@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Jessy Shiroma and I am a teacher at Aiea Intermediate School. I am emailing to testify my perspective 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 not at all happy with the ambiguity of the DOE's comprehensive plan. School starts in 3 weeks, and there seems to be very little concern for the well-being and safety of faculty and students. As someone who proudly attended school via the HI public school systems and grew up wanting to be a part of this department, I am very disappointed, offended, and ashamed of the DOE and its lack of care for its faculty and students. Setting desks only 3 feet apart; not requiring or providing masks; and not supporting schools with thorough sanitization procedures, supplies, and guidelines IS ignorant of our contractual agreement and CDC's guidelines.

For the first time to this extent, people's lives are at stake. Do what you will, but know that any COVID-related spread, illnesses, and fatalities that any members of DOE schools experience happen at the hands of those who have failed to protect them. For this you will be remembered.

Best,
Jessy Shiroma

Testimony

Lynley Hayes <lynleyj@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:42 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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.”

I have read that schools are not allowed to choose fully online learning and that staff has to return to campus full time with students there part/full time.

I am a Registered Nurse and know quite frankly this is IMPOSSIBLE for the protection of our entire state. There will be an exponential amount of spread of COVID19 in Hawaii as there is NO DEGREE of SAFETY in place for schools to reopen.

I am praying for a change in the policy.

Sincerely,
Lynley Hayes

Testimony

Amanda Dewey <ScottAmandaD@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:43 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I have been an educator for 13 years and love my position, school, and students. I am also a dedicated Mother who is realistic, but appropriately protective of my children. My husband and I don't have family that lives here in Hawaii, so don't have the option to keep our children at home where they are most safe from this pandemic. Therefore, we are sending them to school this year in hopes that a safe environment will be available to them. This includes social distancing, disinfecting surfaces, washing hands and wearing masks. These methods are proven and we are currently seeing in other states what happens when these methods are loosened.

When we go out in public, we stay 6 ft. from others because that is what is safest. To suggest that a shorter distance is still safe not only puts my children at risk, but my students, and myself as well. I have experience at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and students of any age are not robots and will not mechanically sit facing forward for an entire period. Please keep the distance at 6ft apart for all ages so that we can show our younger generations how to appropriately handle a pandemic.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Amanda

Testimony - Agenda item: VI. A. Reopening of schools

Risa Carles <risacarles@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Risa Carles
P.O. Box 1541
Kea'au, HI 96749

Waiakea High School
155 W. Kawili Street
Hilo HI 96720

Tuesday, June 7th, 2020

Dear BOE Chairperson, Catherine Payne, and Members of the Board:

Agenda item: VI. A. Reopening of schools
Position: Oppose

1.) **Masks and Social Distancing: Many public schools and colleges in the U.S. are requiring 360° of SIX (6) feet of social distancing between students, OR 360° of THREE (3) feet, in ANY DIRECTION, WITH MASKS. Under NO circumstances should students, teachers** (or other school personnel working in close proximity with others) **be allowed to physically attend classes/work on campus if they are closer than 360° SIX (6) feet apart, if they are NOT properly wearing a mask**. Wearing masks and appropriately (Six feet, 360°) distancing is publicly mandated when simply going to the Post Office, to Walmart, or any other public location, even though persons in these places may only be there for short periods, and they may opt to have little to no interaction with others. Y**et, the State has determined that their plan to allow students to attend classes on campus only calls for three-foot, side-to-side distancing, and that masking is merely recommended, but not required, nor is it enforceable, despite the fact that infected, asymptomatic individuals are thought to be more contagious during the time prior to demonstration of symptoms than at any other time. This is unacceptable, and a violation of commonly-accepted medical/public health best practices.**

2.) **Free, and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Students who opt to NOT want to wear masks** (or when parents do not want their children to wear masks) **will NOT be denied a FAPE, as they can opt to participate in online education. Their choice to eschew/wantonly disregard sound medical/health practices IS**

their right. What is NOT their right is to jeopardize the health of others who know enough to follow the current, scientific advice of medical experts.

3.) **Children's Infection Rate: It is extremely short-sighted to think that opening the school only affects children and youths. It does not.** Though it's not always the case, while students generally are less likely to contract Covid-19 than are adults, and they generally suffer less severely, children come in contact with MANY adults who have no such protections. Furthermore, schools are not staffed by children. Teachers and staff are all adults; many of us are older, have existing health issues, and/or care for elderly kupuna. Are family members, teachers, and school staff just disposable childcare providers? Even if you think we are, who will replace us when WE get Covid-19?

4.) Multi-Family & Multi-Generational Homes: NOT mandating masks, AND implementing a strict six-feet, 360° separation policy on-campus wrongly places students, teachers, and families in greatly elevated jeopardy of contracting Covid-19. Due to the high cost of living, and traditional cultural practices, Hawai'i families frequently live in larger extended, multi-generational family homes than do our mainland counterparts. To willfully ignore best medical practices places the health of large numbers of family members, including older/elderly (who are often child-care providers) persons at great risk.

5.) **If mandatory, and enforceable mask usage, and 360° 6 feet of social distancing is not possible, except for special, at-risk populations (such as Sp.Ed. and ELL) 100% Online Instruction for the rest of 2020 should occur (for the first semester of the 2020-2021 SY): There is NO reason that Hawai'i cannot successfully engage in 100% distance learning for at least the entire first semester of the 2020-2021 SY.** Schools can loan Chromebooks/laptops, and Spectrum has offered to provide service to households without internet. This is something that the State needs to look into, and seriously consider this as a viable option, and add it to the three options provided to schools.

6.) The optional attendance situation of Q4 2019-2020 is NOT the same as the mandatory attendance situation of Q1 2020-2021, so the less than stellar outcomes of the former term should NOT be allowed to dictate the policies of the latter. ALL terms in 2020-2021 will have mandatory attendance, so students will not be able to decide to opt out the way many did in the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 SY. The grading situation in Q4 of 2019-2020 was (FYI, year grades were based upon the average of Q1, Q2, & Q3) that work completed during Q4 could only INCREASE students' grades. They could NOT decrease. So, students *did the math*, so to speak, and then IF they were satisfied with their grades (many were, even if they were simply passing), they opted to not to attend and participate. Meanwhile, teachers worked tirelessly to assist and support any who were in jeopardy of failing, those who wanted to bring up grades, and who attended simply for the love of learning. BTW, instead of looking at attendance rates, look at failure rates. FAILURE rates are a FAR better indicator of how well we performed than are attendance rates. Administrators and Complex Area Superintendents were negatively

evaluated, based wrongly upon optional/enrichment period attendance. **Due to this loophole, many students opted to not participate because their grades were acceptable to students and parents, as opting to NOT participate wouldn't lower their grades**. **This will NOT be the case during the 2020-2021 SY. Attendance will be mandatory, and students must participate to earn grades. Online instruction CAN and DOES work.**

7.) **We need to stop pretending that forcing students to return to on-campus instruction at this medically-unsound, and premature juncture has anything to do with education, or the best interests of Hawaii's children.** To claim otherwise sends a clear message to the people of Hawai'i that students, teachers, their families, and by extension, to our communities as a whole, are expendable, and are considered acceptable collateral damage in the rush to get folks back to work. Hawaii's teachers are professionals. We will meet students where they are, and work to bridge the gaps, as much as possible now, and even more when it is safe to do so. Don't forget, ALL children in the U.S., and in the world, are in this same situation. Not just ours. But, we can only help a child if he or she is alive. No one wants to return to business as usual than teachers. But, we don't want to do it unless it is actually safe. It is NOT safe at this time. If it was, the same health standards, precautions, and protocols would be enacted Statewide. We ALL know it isn't. Please don't throw us all under the bus for political reasons.

8.) Consequences of Teachers Contracting Covid-19: Once even one or two students +/or teachers contract this virus, everything will change. If any school becomes a hotspot, many teachers will be out on sick leave. Some will likely die. We already have a terrible teacher shortage due to the high cost of living, and relatively low pay. Many of us are leaving Hawai'i due to our pay not keeping up with the cost-of-living in our beautiful State, and more will be forced to do so if threatened pay cuts become a reality. We've been dealing with a terrible sub shortage as it is. At one point or another, most teachers have come to school sick because we couldn't find a sub. But, it's not appropriate to do that with Covid-19 running rampant. If we present as sick, we need to stay home. So do students. With this pandemic, it's going to be near impossible to procure competent and capable substitutes (either short-term or long-term subs). These are legitimate, relevant issues that no one wants to think about. They need to be considered, and we need to plan accordingly. If we err, let us err in the favor of saving lives. Jobs, we can get back. We can't bring back loved ones who have died.

A few questions worthy of consideration:

--> Those who become ill, and who are without deep ties and family here, will likely need to move. How will THAT affect our economy, and education? We already have shortages.

--> If someone at school with whom I have been in contact tests positive for Covid-19, who will teach my class? The security guards? The

Cafeteria workers? The classroom cleaners? Every sub I know has said that they will NOT be teaching this year due to the unsafe conditions. If I am sick, will I be expected to teach online? If so, why can't we teach online, so we DON'T need to get sick?

--> If we get sick, will we have to use our sick leave? What if we are out of sick leave? Will we be forced to apply for Public Assistance, or State Medical?

-->If we get sick, will we be able to successfully file Workman's Comp claims, because the State knowingly sent us into unsafe working conditions?

9.) **Legitimate Lawsuits and Costly Settlements: Willfully, and knowingly disregarding the clear, and commonly accepted health safeguards in Hawaii's schools, and forcing schools to open will jeopardize the health and welfare of Hawaii's keiki, Hawaii's teachers, and the families, and community members we ALL come into contact with, and it is entirely unacceptable.** Should this negligence occur, it will likely lead to costly lawsuits, presumably many of which will be settled in favor of the plaintiffs. Students' families will sue. Teachers, and/or their survivors will sue. Lawsuits will occur, and once one plaintiff prevails, others lawsuits will certainly follow.
Can Hawai'i REALLY afford these payouts, especially right now?

Some may say that teachers have a choice to return to school. But do we really? Without our jobs we lose our housing, the ability to feed our families, to provide medical insurance, and we risk losing our pensions. Is that *really* a choice? Would the State prefer that large numbers of such a huge segment of Hawaii's middle class declare bankruptcy, and to go on Public Assistance instead of teaching online? It may sound dramatic, but is it really THAT far fetched? I don't think so, and neither do many of my colleagues.

10.) **Will YOU apply the same reduced protective measures to YOUR workplaces? Will YOU allow the same reduced health and safety measures to occur Statewide? If not, why not? With all due respect, and no rudeness, or sarcasm intended, if it's safe enough to return, why is everyone in the State still meeting and working using Zoom Meetings, wearing masks, and social distancing?** Perhaps when it's safe enough for all of YOU to return to normal, and to allow the REST OF THE STATE to do so, perhaps THAT'S when you should expect Hawaii's children and teachers to do the same. YOU don't do it because it's currently UNSAFE, and we ALL know it. Why set higher health standards for YOURSELVES than for students, teachers, and those they come into contact with? To choose to do so is shameful. As a State, we should be better than that.

11.) When this is over, which side of history do YOU want to be on? Think of the long-term consequences. How big of a death toll are you willing to accept?

We all know there are certain politicians who are *insisting* that all schools open, and that we all return to business as usual immediately. And, we all know why. Is that who YOU are?

Thank you for your consideration.

Please note the links from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), below.

- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html#feasibility-adaptations
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html

Malama pono,

Risa Carles
Grade Nine English Teacher
Freshman Academy

Waiākea High School
155 W. Kawili Street
Hilo, HI 96720

risa.carles@k12.hi.us

“The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil. "
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Gmail

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

Testimony

nnakama726@gmail.com <nnakama726@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:44 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Naomi Muraoka, I teach at Wilcox Elementary School on Kaua'i. I am testifying on the discussion item VI(A): presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-21 school year.
I think 3 ft is not safe for the students and teachers. They need to be 6 ft apart to lessen the spread of germs, especially if they are not wearing masks.
Also, being 3 ft away makes it easy for students to share their school supplies, which they will try to do. If they are 6 ft apart, sharing supplies is more difficult.
Please don't put our kids and teachers in harms way! I have a 3 year old and a 1 year old, and I want to keep them safe.
Thank you,
Naomi Muraoka

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Randall Ayabe <randall.ayabe@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing regarding Discussion Item Vi(A) the opening of school. I am a 2nd grade teacher and am fearful of returning back to work if student desks are allowed only 3 feet apart. I am not only fearful for myself and my family but my elderly mother who is dependent upon me for her food and care. Perhaps the virus doesn't affect young children as much as adults but those young children will pass the virus to their families as well as to my family. Please make sure we strictly adhere to the State and CDC guidelines of a 6 foot distance and not just 6 feet when possible.

Yours truly,
Randy Ayabe
Helemano Elem.

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

TESTIMONY

Trav K <trav.kashiwa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:45 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 Travis Kashiwa and I am a school teacher at Momilani Elementary school, Pearl City complex, Leeward District.

I am not comfortable with spacing student seats three feet apart without masks. **This directly contradicts our agreement with the state** and 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.” 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. This very thought scares me.

Why is it that the UH college system will be spacing their students 6 feet apart and the elementary and secondary public school system can space their students 3 feet apart? Six feet distance is required at Costco and restaurants. Why would it be different for elementary and secondary public school students and teachers? The same rules that apply to our UH college system and public, should also be followed in our elementary and secondary public schools.

I do not understand the logic of requiring people to wear masks in public places, but not in a public school classroom. What is this rule suggesting? COVID-19 doesn't spread in classrooms? It's a risk families of these schools will need to take? What?

For the health and safety of ALL people, please keep to the 6 feet social distancing in our public schools. Please keep our students, teachers, and our families safe.

Mahalo!

Gmail

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

Testimony

Angela C LeSuer <angelalesuer@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:48 PM
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. Please honor the contractual agreement with classrooms with six feet between student desks.

Angela LeSuer
King Intermediate and Moanalua 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 Eriko Hirose and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at Kaneohe 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 strongly believe that 3 foot distance between desks with 2nd graders is 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.

My school says that we can fit more than 20 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 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 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, 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.

Sincerely,
Eriko Hirose

Gmail

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

Testimony

Erin L <erintulee@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

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 am the mother of a student at Kawananakoa Middle School. I strongly urge you to consider mandating 6 feet of distance between each person at all times and that each person wears masks at all times (including in the classroom).

The recent surge in community spread should indicate how contagious COVID-19 is and we need to keep our children safe. Incidents such as the cluster at the Hawaiian Airlines flight attendant class should be a lesson on how much risk there is and how much we need to do everything we can to lesson this risk for our children.

I appreciate your actions to protect our children.

Erin Lee

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

TESTIMONY

Randy Ayabe <ran808@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:51 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please do not put my child at risk by allowing only a 3 foot distance between student desks. If you have children you know they are notorious for not covering sneezes and coughs no matter how many times you tell them to do so. Imagine a class of 20-30 students. If facemasks are not required in the classroom you are putting my child and my family at risk by allowing 3 feet distances between desks. Why are there 6 feet distance requirements everywhere else but not at schools?

IF DESKS ARE ALLOWED TO BE ONLY 3 FEET APART MY CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ATTENDING SCHOOL. YES, THEY WILL MISS A YEAR OR EDUCATION BUT THEIR HEALTH AND THAT OF MY FAMILY IS OF MUCH MORE IMPORTANCE.

Sincerely,
Gerri Nakasone

Testimony for DOE schools reopening

Kristina Lum <kpp20@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:52 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE

I am a Behavior Specialist in the Honolulu District and would like to address concerns regarding:
Agenda item: VI.
Discussion Items, A. Presentation of DOE's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools

Concerns:

1. Usage of masks: I have concerns regarding students not being required to wear masks in the classroom, but that they must wear it outside of the classroom. The idea of "bubbles" is good in theory, but students do not exist in just their classroom bubble. They interact with their families, extra-curricular activities, and the community. These are additional areas of exposure for them as their family members work and interact with others and so on. We also know that children are more susceptible to being carriers of Covid and so this is putting staff and each child's family members at risk. Wearing a mask reduces exposure by up to 70%.

2. Temperature checking: I think all students should have their temperature checked every day. This could be done when students arrive om campus or at the door of the classroom before students enter. Just looking at a student is not going to inform us if they are sick. Many people with Covid are asymptomatic so that is not a viable screening tool. We also know that if money to purchase thermometers is an issue, that there are many community partners that would gladly help to support this as it is in everyone's best interest to reduce exposure and keep people healthy and safe.

Private schools are requiring students to wear their masks the entire day and are doing temperature screenings. This is not unreasonable to ask of schools, staff, and students. I would gladly make myself available to help with this as I know others would as well.

If schools are concerned about the mental health effect on students from not being able to see facial expressions, there are masks that have a see-through covering over the mouth so that you can see someone's mouth while still being safe. As someone who works at schools across Honolulu District, including the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind, this type of mask would be very important to have as reading lips and seeing facial expressions is an important part of communication in the deaf community.

I am also immuno-compromised. Therefore, what I am asking for is to make sure we are addressing everyone's safety and well-being so that we can keep schools open and kids attending in person.

Thank you for your time and attention to this

Kristina Lum

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jenna Skedeleski <jskedeleski@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:52 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this email to express concern about Discussion Item VI(A) Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for this upcoming school year. My name is Jenna Nitahara and I am a teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School.

I am concerned about both the ruling of a 3 foot distance between desks rather than 6 feet, and the implementation that all students wear face masks. As a middle school teacher, I feel like my students are old enough to understand the repercussions of this virus and the severity of it to those that already suffer from respiratory disease. Therefore, implementing a 6 foot distance between seats would be something they could understand along with wearing a face mask or shield at all times. If we are required to retain a distance of 6 feet while shopping, going to the bank, getting food, or even going walking, how come we cannot have the same expectation in the classroom. Our keiki are our future and preserving their health and that of their families should be at the forefront.

I hope you strongly consider all of our testimonies and act in the best interest of our keiki, kupuna, and lahui.

With respect,
Jenna Nitahara

Gmail

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

Testimony for Requiring Wearing Masks & 6' Distancing in the classroom

Rosa Rojas <rosarojas24@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:55 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I would like to submit testimony 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.

To the decision makers that have the future of safety in your hands,

My name is Rosa Dayao. I have been a K-12 educator for 14 years and have taught in Hawaii for 11 years. Having worked in the DOE for 8 years at Mānoa Elementary School I am very worried about the health and well being of my former colleagues and students.

I worry that 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 amounts 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 Social Emotional Learning (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 reopening 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.

I ask both the Board of Education and the Hawaii Department of Education leaders to ask yourselves this question. Would you be a substitute teacher for a day in a classroom that has 30 students with only 1.5 feet passing between desks? Would you feel safe with a young student speaking with you closely without a mask on? Or wonder if students are feeling anxious about being close to unmasked peers?

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. We need to be sure that BOE and the DOE members are responsible people of the community that will help Hawaii be a state that will make a safe transition into an uncertain future.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Emphatically submitted by
Rosa Dayao,
Concerned private citizen
Teacher at an independent school
Advocate for Children and Teachers
Parent
Community member

Gmail

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

Testimony

Stephanie Kau <stephanie.kau@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:58 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 Stephanie Kau and I am a teacher at Kapalama Elementary School. I am writing as I am in disagreement with the guidelines set forward for reopening our schools.

Throughout the past months, the push has been on social distancing and the use of masks in order to stop the spread of COVID 19 within the community. That is why I am appalled that these two measures are NOT being required to be in place within the classroom. I understand that as. a whole, young children do not seem to get very sick if infected. However, they can infect the others around them, including the teachers and adults within the classroom. and then the children may possibly go home and spread it to their home environment which can include others who may be at risk such as kupuna.

With the rise in cases in the last few days and the seemingly pandemic fatigue by those in the community, people do not seem to be taking it seriously and children may be infected and become asymptomatic carriers. The health department says the common theme is that people are letting their guard down by not wearing masks and not social distancing. Dr. Sarah Park is saying that, "We can slow things down with investigations and the contact tracing but we can't stop the disease activity if people are not masking, are not physically distancing. It's a community effort." Mayor Caldwell just imposed a mandatory mask mandate as it is evident that it is a much needed measure to help keep our community safe.

I agree that schools need to reopen. However, we need to do it safely with the welfare of not only the students but of the teachers as well. I want to go back to school and do my job but I cannot work under these hazardous working conditions. Proper social distancing and the required use of masks is a must so that we can ensure the safety of all involved to the best of our ability. Please reconsider and implement these measures into your school reopening plans.

Mahalo,
Stephanie Kau

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

3 FEET IS UNACCEPTABLE

Sally Ayabe <salayabe@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:59 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

How can you put our keiki at risk with only a 3 foot distance between student desks when we as grown ups maintain a 6 foot distance? Shame on you if you allow this to happen.

Sally Ayabe

Testimony

Billie-Ann Takahashi <stitchh2@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 10:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,
I am a DOE teacher and am extremely concerned and want to be sure you understand and see the need for the 6 foot distancing that the CDC has been promoting. Why is it that students and teachers are being “allowed” to follow a 3 feet distancing when facing in the same direction. As I have listened to the words of Sarah Park, she has said that “they felt” it was an adequate distance to keep safe. Who felt? By what authority? Dr. Sarah Park and Bruce Anderson are more knowledgeable than those making decisions about social distancing to avoid spreading the virus? Who are they to defy the safe distance recommended by authorities across the country. Even the colleges are either 6 ft all around or using remote learning. How is it that our poor conditions—overcrowded classrooms in our neglected Hawai’i DOE classrooms—is causing these incompetent leaders to give in to this closer distance so that more students can be squeezed into a room. Preschool to grade 12—3 feet spacing ? How can students stay seated forward with that half distance and be safe. The younger students are not likely to even keep that mask on consistently. They can be asymptomatically carrying the virus and spreading it when they go home. They could even bring the virus from another exposure from their family bubble.
How can you even talk about a “Ohana bubble”? When they leave school, they are taking whatever they are exposed to HOME...to immune compromised, elderly, and other family members with health issues.
There is also no consideration being given to teachers and other School employees, especially teachers in the classroom that have another “Ohana bubble” at home...their loved ones.
How can you have so little regard for all that are a part of the school environment? We are NOT second class citizens!!! We deserve the same consideration that All of society has learned-basic “ social distancing” is “SIX FEET apart” NOT 3 feet.

I have the utmost respect for Ms. Catherine Payne and other members of the Board of Education. You are highly educated and experienced in knowing what is fair practice. The schools are NOT being treated fairly and humanely if we are told we only deserve a 3 feet Social distance to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus in the school community. Please do not allow this to be implemented. Please see that the distance must be 6 feet all around.

Respectfully,

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Craig Kaneshiro <cskane@hawaiiantel.net> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:00 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 parent and teacher, I am asking the Board to honor the contractural agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

Speaking as a parent, I want my children to be safe from this virus should they return to school. I feel the best education should be in the classroom where classroom management and learning can be taught more effectively. If the six feet social distancing is applied out in public, why shouldn't it be applied in school where students are in enclosed rooms for at least an hour at a time? In addition, with out face masks?
Think about it. The virus spreads like crazy. Students will be out of school and predictably, teachers and staff.
Families will be affected. Will the schools have to close like in Korea and Beijing?

We already lost one quarter of school last year. I don't think students can afford to lose any more time and be set back with their learning.

Stephanie Kaneshiro
Ewa Elementary School

My children attend: Highlands Intermidiate and Pearl City High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jessica Hanato <jessica.hanato@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Jessica Guillemo and I am a first grade teacher at Konawaena Elementary School. I have serious concerns about the BOE's decision to go ahead and open school. Currently our state has started reopening and immediately we have seen a rise in COVID cases. Not only are cases starting to rise if we come out of quarantine to teach in the classroom instead of continuing with distance learning I am now putting myself and my family at risk! Either it is safe for all students to return to the classroom or it isn't safe at all. There is no in between.

In addition to putting myself at risk, the BOE is not even planning on following the CDC guidelines of 6 feet social distancing. This needs to be maintained everywhere especially in the classroom. How is it that I have to stay 6 feet away from the person in front of me at the grocery store, at the bank, and even if I eat at a lunch truck outdoors, BUT in my work place where I'm supposed to feel safe I only have to be 3 feet away? Again we are NOT in compliance with CDC guidelines.

There are so many holes in the plans for us to return to school. I ask you would you return to work under the same conditions? Where your co-worker were allowed to stay closer than 6 feet? Where there isn't enough staff for proper cleaning because there is a lack of funding and cleaning supplies? Where there is the very real chance that today could be the day you get COVID and heaven forbid that you do not recover OR even worse you are asymptotic and pass COVID to a love one and they die as a result. Could you live with yourself? If the answer is no then why would you ask teachers to do exactly that! I implore you to strongly reconsider the start of school, going back to distance learning and requiring that social distancing be maintained everywhere. Again school is either safe for everybody to return or NOT AT ALL. There is no in between.

Mahalo Nui,

Jessica Guillermo
Konawaena Elementary
Konawaena Complex , Hawai'i Island

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jenn B. <jennifer.kh.bailey@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:01 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. My name is Jennifer Bailey and I am a teacher at Helemano Elementary School.

After reading the agreement between the Board of Education and HSTA, I felt a little less anxiety about returning to work. It seemed like I would have some of the necessary safety precautions needed to resume in-person teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. But I was shocked to find out a few days later that the DOE is sticking with 3 feet of distance between student desks to allow for more students in the classrooms when the conventional wisdom (and CDC) states that the minimum should be 6 feet and 10 feet when indoors, especially for longer periods of time.

As a lower elementary special education teacher, I recognize the importance of maximizing face to face instruction with our K-3, ELL, and special education students. But we should not be doing so at the expense of their health and safety. The CDC recommends a minimum of 6 feet of distance. UH is using 6 feet of distance. Retail stores are also using 6 feet of distance. Why would we allow 5 - 8 year old students, or students of any age, to be seated 3 feet apart?

The justification seems to be that they will all be seated facing forward. But it does not take into account the very high likelihood that 5 - 8 year olds will likely turn toward a neighboring peer at some point during the day. If one person is sick, that could easily spread to a full class of 20 or more students - even more so when masks are not being required in classrooms if students are seated 3 feet apart. We are also not doing temperature checks upon arrival, relying instead on screening questions. This increases the possibility that a sick child will not be caught in time to prevent the spread of the virus.

I am a special educator with two children under age five at home. My parents, who are at higher risk for Covid-19, babysit my children. I am also diagnosed with an autoimmune condition that I manage with daily medication. I enjoy my work but the last thing I want to do is get sick and then spread it throughout my family. I also would never want my students or their families to suffer through the experience of being sick with Covid-19.

I implore you to take maximum precautions when reopening our classrooms! Take into consideration that the cases in Hawaii are going up and that the virus spreads very easily (e.g. within families, at the gym, at the Hawaiian Airlines training). For some of us, Covid-19 can mean life or death, so please think of each person you are affecting with your decisions.

Please follow the CDC guidelines and institute a requirement of 6 feet of distance between everyone on campus as much as possible. Make masks required for everyone at all times as much as possible. Require temperature checks upon arrival. Require desktop screens for all students. Please take action to keep our students, families and teachers/staff safe as we all do our best to provide an education during this pandemic.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bailey

Gmail

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

Testimony for Discussion Item VI(A): Reopening Schools

Robert Lozano <rnalozano@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:28 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.

Please help us to keep our students and school staff safe. We need six feet of distancing as well as masks or face shields while in classrooms. Please do not ask students, teachers, and staff to jeopardize their health and safety by decreasing the distance we keep between ourselves, and by not making available PPE (masks/face shields) mandatory while on campus and in classrooms. I have heard that distancing of only three feet is being considered. Additionally, I have heard that masks and face shields would not be required in classrooms. These factors will weaken our ability to open safely in the new school year. Being a teacher, having a spouse who is a teacher’s assistant (educational assistant) at my school, and having a child at our school, we will need to exercise the utmost caution to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. Six feet of social distancing and masks/face shields in classrooms will help us to do so.

Mahalo,

Robert Lozano
Teacher
Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School

Gmail

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

Enforce 6ft of distancing!

Marlene Medeiros <mkmedeir@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am typing this to promote and advocate for 6ft of social distancing no matter which direction students are positioned in a classroom. I feel it is our moral obligation as a society to be socially responsible for the health and well being of our communities. With COVID on the rise in our state we cannot ignore what the CDC suggests. Please reconsider your claim to the 3ft distant if students are all facing the same direction. We are already practicing 6ft of social distancing at ALL stores, restaurants, and hopefully in public spaces so let's continue to model to our keiki that 6ft of distance is a more respectable distant in terms of practicing social distancing then 3. If you tell administrations that 3ft of distance is a suitable distant as long as students are all facing the same direction then, at a high school and middle school, they have the say in how many students can be in a class at one time. 3ft of distance allows for more students to be put in classes and that's what we don't want here. 6ft of distance allows for less students in a class and that is a better "bubble" to work within. Please recanter your suggested 3ft distance amping our keiki!!

Mahalo,
Pua Medeiros

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Charmaine Lyons <chhaaamm@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:05 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 Charmaine Lyons and I am speaking both as a teacher and a parent. I teach at Ka Waihona O Ka Na'auao PCS and my child attends Mililani Middle School.

As a teacher, I am not comfortable/confident that the 3 ft distancing is enough space between children to keep a safe distance from each other. I can't imagine doing 3ft distancing within the classroom. With 3 ft distancing from chair to chair, students are still able to extend their arms out and 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 kids on a daily basis and know, keeping still for long periods of time is almost impossible. Students are not as cautious and aware of practicing safe social distancing. If UH Manoa who see's college students, are able to practice 6 ft social distancing, why are little kids expected to practice social distancing with 3ft. It doesn't make any sense!

Trying to squeeze students in a smaller space is very risky and impossible. Main concern is the safety and health of everyone!

Teachers should be supplied with non-contact thermometer to do temperature checks upon arrival. We shouldn't have to visually asses if a student has a fever or not.

Lastly, I want to be assured that schools will practice social distancing and that masks will be required. As long as there is no vaccine, we cannot take COVID-19 lightly. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others and risk. HEALTH AND SAFETY FIRST!

Sincerely,
Charmaine Lyons

Gmail

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

Require distance of 6' between desks in classrooms

Shelly Hecker <shellyhecker@waikikischool.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:09 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To: Board of Education

I am a first grade teacher at Waikiki School, and am asking that the BOE support the 6' distance between desks in classrooms, as agreed in the MOU.

How can Hawai'i's teaching workforce trust that Superintendent Kishimoto takes the health of ourselves and our students seriously, when shortly after signing the MOU, she announced that seats could be 3' apart as long as they are facing forward? She has not presented any evidence from the Hawai'i Department of Health supporting the 3' distance. CDC guidelines specifically states, "outside your home put 6' distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household."

The 6' CDC guideline that was agreed to in the MOU is one part of many, many reopening guidelines, but an essential of the 3-part guidelines to keep ourselves and others safe, and to help control this terrible pandemic. In today's press conference, in response to the highest day of COVID-19 infection, Gov. Ige, Dr. Anderson, and Dr. Park all said that coronavirus still is a serious threat in Hawai'i and to not let down your guard. All repeatedly reiterated personal responsibility to:

*Maintain Social Distance
*Wear a Mask
*Wash Hands

There is not an exception to maintain 6' social distance per CDC guidelines when we are in the classroom.

I am also very concerned with the increasing numbers of (known) COVID-19 cases in the last days and weeks. Today's high of 41 total in Hawai'i, and 38 on O'ahu via community transmission is very concerning. The increasing number of COVID-19 (confirmed) cases, coupled with news that the virus is airborne, and travel on August 1st opening to people not required to do a 14 day quarantine, makes me come to the conclusion that the outlook for schools opening safely on August 4th is looking worse and worse.

I went into teaching because I love children and learning and educating and the school atmosphere. I do not want anyone put at greater risk because of 3' versus 6' between desks. Please, do the right thing and keep all of our school staff and students' best interests in mind when you decide to keep the 6' distance.

Respectfully,
Shelly Hecker
First Grade Teacher
Waikiki School

Testimony

Kristen Young <kristen-young@centralunionchurch.org> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:10 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.

Aloha, Board of Education:

My name is Kristen Young. I am a Honolulu resident and youth director at a local church that has not yet returned to their buildings to keep the community safe. I know students and teachers across the islands and I am greatly concerned that they will return to school soon with inadequate safety measures.

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 of contracting COVID-19. I learned that 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 work sites 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 am shocked that the HIDOE would go against this and allow a minimum of three feet of distancing.

The combination of school environment, schedule, and population poses a high risk for spreading COVID-19 and taking it back to the larger community. School staff and students' health MUST be prioritized—not only for them, but also for the larger community. Additionally, the concern for safety may keep teachers from doing their job as well as they could, or prevent students from performing their best. This is not quality education.

As students and teachers are forced to return to school, please provide firm guidelines that adhere to strict recommendations (from the CDC, HSTA, etc.) that prioritize health and safety to create a positive learning environment.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kristen

Gmail

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

Testimony

Brigette O'shaughnessy <brigette.o'shaughnessy@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:12 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"

Aloha!
I am a parent of an incoming 6th grader and I am a public high school teacher in Hawaii.

We all know that kids can't all face one direction while seated. They will move their heads around and talk; not even sure if they will be wearing masks or wearing them appropriately. The six feet mandate will ensure our safety. You MUST enforce the 6 feet distance between each student/ desk in all schools for the safety of children and teachers.

I am concerned!! This is no joke!!

SlAll students, in all grades, MUST wear masks to be allowed into classroom. Again, this is to help those around us and ourselves!

6 feet distancing!!!!! (NOT just 3 feet)
Wear your mask!!!!!

Please enforce these from the state level, now!!

Mahalo!!

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Gmail

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

Testimony re: Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on DOE's plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year

R. Kamita <rkamita@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Rene Kamita and 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. I am the parent of two students: an incoming 4th grader at Ma'ema'e Elementary School and an incoming 6th grader at Kawananakoa Middle School. I am extremely concerned that under the DOE's current guidance for reopening schools, I will be sending my children into an environment where there is a high risk of contracting COVID-19.

I am particularly concerned about the DOE's guidance 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.
- [I]f students are sitting three feet apart, and facing the same way, wearing a mask is not required.

http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/School-Reopening-Framework---Health-and-Safety.aspx

I do not understand why it is considered safe for students to sit three feet apart, indoors, and not wear masks. That is not social distancing. According to the CDC, "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." We are repeatedly reminded to wear masks and to social distance to slow the spread of COVID-19. Regarding the spike of 41 new COVID-19 cases on July 7, Hawaii State Department of Health Epidemiologist Sarah Park said. "… We need to mask up. We need to keep our distance around each other." https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/07/07/breaking-news/hawaii-records-41-new-coronavirus-cases-in-states-highest-daily-increase-since-pandemic-began/

In addition to placing the health of students, faculty and staff at risk, this also places at risk entire families, including multigenerational households with kupuna.

I understand that the DOE wants to avoid anxiety that may be caused by a "classroom full of mask-wearing students" and that many public schools face space and resource constraints. I also understand the value of in-person instruction and interaction for students. To address parents' public safety concerns, however, I urge the Board to consider:

- It is not clear what it means that the Department of Health's guidance was "utilized" in developing the DOE's guidelines. Will DOH issue a statement that the measures recommended by the DOE, or that certain DOE proposals, present an acceptable risk for students, faculty, and staff?
- Instead of relaxing mandates regarding indoor social distancing, can alternatives can be implemented to maintain social distancing (e.g., staggered schedules, outdoor teaching)?
- Can masks be required while in the classroom - especially if students will be three feet apart -- unless there are extenuating health or safety concerns?

This is a difficult and unprecedented situation, presenting challenges to all. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard today and for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Rene Kamita
Parent

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Ivan Lee <ivanghlee@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:13 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 with the Hawaii Board of Education's decision to allow 3-feet of distance between students when school resumes. I strongly believe that our children should resume education as soon as possible, but I do not agree that we should do so at the expense of our children's health and safety.

I would rather hold my daughter back from school for a year, than to put her safety at risk in this way. Others may not feel the same, and may very well follow the decisions of our Education System's Leaders, but it is the responsibility of our government to protect our citizens in every way of life.

Reconsider this policy because it is irresponsible and detrimental to the young children who trust and rely on the governance of our education system.

Ivan Lee
My Daughter attends Kawananakoa Middle School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Gr Oshiro <groshiro@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:13 PM
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. For the health and safety of our students and staff, we need to make sure we follow CDC guidelines and should always be 6ft apart when ever possible. I think BOE should honor the contractual agreement and have classrooms configured with six feet between student desks.

I fall into the category of "high-risk" because of my diabetes. I do even want to think about the "what if's" because this is for the health and safety for all involved. It'll be very sad if we open up schools and have to shutdown schools due to COVID19 just like the 4th quarter of the School Year 2019-2020.

Thank you,
Grant Oshiro
Ewa Elementary School
Special Education Teacher
Sent from my iPhone

TESTIMONY

Brandi Chung <brandichung@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:15 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 Brandi Chung and I am speaking as a teacher from Mililani Mauka 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 taught summer hub and attempted the 3 foot distance between desks with only 7 Kindergarten students. Although my students had a difficult time in the beginning from turning to talk to their peers throughout the day, they were able to keep their distance because the class size was limited with only 7 students. I can’t imagine doing this with a whole class of 20+ students. During the summer hub, I was always at the student's desks providing them with instruction. If there was only a 3ft distance between desks, I would be in very close and unsafe proximity to each student when helping the students.

My school says that we can fit up to 22 students “comfortably” with 4 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.

Although I want to have children back in school everyday, 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.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Gmail

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

Re: healthcare

Shari Nishida <babybugs.sn@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:17 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I don't think our children should sit 3 feet apart. Even sitting 6 feet apart is too close. Facing each other will be risking our children's life.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nicholas Gima <nsgima1@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:18 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 Nicholas Gima and I am a senior at Maui High School. I have a brother that also attends Maui High and mother that teaches elementary students. I oppose the DOE's plan for reopening school.

Having a six-foot distance between students and staff is crucial to maintain safety within the school environment. With many students and staff members on campus, the spread of the virus will occur. However, keeping a six-foot social distancing rule similar to everywhere else in public areas may help reduce the potential number of cases.

The three-foot distancing rule that the Board of Education is proposing contradicts what has been instructed to the public over the past four months. This puts our teachers and students at a much higher risk of contracting the virus. This is more serious in elementary schools; younger students tend to lack proper hygiene skills. The kids may make contact with infected surfaces and may contract the virus by scratching their eyes or licking their fingers. They tend to be less careful about washing their hands. Having elementary students three feet away from each other makes them more susceptible to catching and spreading COVID-19.

Please consider the health and safety of staff, students, and families. Is this decision really what is best for us?

Thank you.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Tricia Allen <tricia.1.allen@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:21 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 Educations comprehensive plan for reopening schools for upcoming 2020/2021 school year.

My name is Tricia Allen and my two youngest children go to Kalaheo School on Kauai.

I am not comfortable with only having 3 feet of distance between students and no face masks. We have immunocompromised family members and we can not afford to get them sick.

Personally, I would like an elders INC option for the 2020/2021 school year. But, if that's not available, then a MINIMUM of six feet and masks(or face shields) should be used. Or, maybe plexiglass dividers around the children's desks.

Thank you!
--
Tricia Allen
tricia.1.allen@gmail.com

Testimony

Martin and Heather Malley <malley@malleyweb.com> Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 11:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear members of the board,

Thank you for listening to our concerns as we make some difficult decisions during this historic time. As a newer teacher on the island (with 19 years of experience teaching 3rd Grade), I have been making many adjustments to the many changes that have happened in the past two years. Besides setting up a new classroom both years, going from one classroom that was so windy it blew everything off my walls to one that was literally 100 degrees for days on end, we have had two different principals in those two years and will be getting a new vice principal. As we prepared to leave for spring break in my second year here, news of school closings and/or delays was beginning. I was following what was happening in Ohio where I am from as the governor shut down The Arnold Classic, one of the biggest events and money makers in Columbus. What was happening was affecting people everywhere. Schools began working on a safe plan to engage as many students as we could in a virtual way. In all my years I have never worked harder.

Now we are looking at how to reopen schools. It is essential that we do so in a way that ensures everyone's safety. My husband and I have been religious about social distancing, wearing masks, not gathering even with family or friends here, because now, during a pandemic, is not the time. I have not gone back to the mainland to see my children, friends, or family, but will have to wait until next summer to see them again. I jokingly tell my students that I am "older than dirt" but along with experience, I also have age and that puts me in one of the risk categories. It is imperative that as we open schools we will do so in a safe, gradual manner. To go from total isolation to being around people; children, parents, and staff, who all have contact with other people, greatly increases the number of overall contacts increases the chances of spreading COVID. It is unwise to gather so many people together as in some of the plans I have been seeing, without masks, without assured 6 foot distance, especially as we our numbers begin to climb. It would be wiser to start small and gradual, allowing for better contact tracing if necessary, and then add on if we continue to have success.

A recent post about reopening (http://burroughsedk12.com/entries/general/re-opening-plans-should-continue-with-the-hypothesis-that-children-are-vectors?fbclid=IwAR2oMo5aRjlXBJza7afho1cv3ev2WSNQaY0piLD6c2LAnQDdXc3DdjKMP30) stated "The study found that while children are underrepresented in Covid-19 testing, children carry the same "viral load" of the virus as adults. This means that children with Covid-19 are equally as infectious as adults with Covid-19. " And point #2: "Everyone has to wear a mask - Not a single person, student or teacher, should be allowed to enter the building without a mask. I find it entirely baffling that people would argue the contrary when the science is clear that wearing a mask saves lives. If you are still an anti-masker, maybe this article will help: Still Confused About Masks? Here's the Science Behind How Face Masks Prevent Coronavirus. Parents, you have weeks to train your children to wear masks safely to support your school's efforts to keep everyone safe." My

response to inquiring friends was: I anticipate much of our day being spent washing hands, reminding to social distance, reminding to keep face covered. Not sure what snack/lunch will look like. It will be hot...we're already having record heat, so we will be taking mental health breaks. I am hoping that the emphasis on testing will be non-existent. I don't mind taking a baseline, but we're really going to just be in survival mode. And as I've said before, maybe this will be the wake-up call about how important our schools are to keep kids safe (perhaps we need programs to ensure families are aware of abuse and how to prevent it so the burden is not on schools), fed, and healthy (physically and mentally) and will be funded accordingly. We have one of the smaller schools at around 450 students, but we only have 2 counselors who never get to rest. Whew!

I have been adapting to long distance learning and, while not ideal, it offers a way to see our kids faces and their smiles until things settle. For now we have to settle for virtual hugs and high fives, which we still won't be able to give even if we do end up in the classroom. I understand parents are feeling stressed, everyone is feeling stressed because there is nothing "normal" about what is happening. One parent in my summer learning class expressed concern about school opening because she only has one child. ONE. I for one would like to help ensure that we keep all in our ohana safe.

Sincerely,

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3rd Grade Teacher

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