Gmail

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

Hard to Staff Differential

Margarita Alo-Chu <margarita.alo-chu@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 4:15 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

`Ano`ai ke aloha,

My name is Margarita L. Alo-Chu, a 25 year native Hawaiian teacher on the Leeward coast of O`ahu. I'm writing to speak about the importance of keeping the hard to staff differential for teachers in the districts that are in dire need of educators. The students on the west coast of O`ahu deserve the same quality education as the students on the east side of O`ahu.

Here's what I mean:
1) In the state of Hawai'i there is only a small percentage of native Hawaiian educators.
2) There are a smaller percentage of native Hawaiian educators that teach on the west coast of O`ahu that is predominantly native Hawaiian communities.
3) Therefore many teachers from out of state tend to be in our local, Hawaiian communities to teach and most never commit to staying on the leeward coast.
4) Therefore native Hawaiian communities continue to suffer the inconsistencies of a committed quality of education for our keiki.
5) Native Hawaiian communities have been plagued with the social injustices of an American society of teaching and learning for too long and not having their due process from the state to own lands for schooling and attain their rights to their Hawaiian homeland to sustain their way of survival.

Taking away this differential to educators that want to commit to the host culture of Hawai'i nei is doing the right thing. It's the "just way" of an equal quality of education for teachers on the Leeward coast of O`ahu and perhaps other areas in the state that are similar in demographics.

Please reconsider and try to find indigenous grants to keep the Hard to Staff pay differential.

Mahalo nui,

M. Alo-Chu
K-12 Educator
Nanakuli High & Intermediate
Wai`anae Moku

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Testimony

David <dberry1954@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 4:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Please continue to fund these differentials. As a hard to staff and a Special Education teacher, I depend on these monies to help make it through these trying and very difficult times. Not only is it the monetary compensation, it's also the feeling that we teachers are finally being recognized for what we do.
Until these differentials were put in place, teachers would not come here to help our Keiki. Many were getting ready to leave or retire. That included me. I have been teaching for almost 30 years, with almost 11 here in Hawaii.
I am not ready to leave or give up. My school and my students depend on me.

Please re-fund these differentials.

Mahalo

David A Berry
Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary School
Special Education teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Differentials

Gary Roberts <isamathteacher@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 4:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

It has come to our attention you are planning to revoke the differentials for hard to staff and Sped. Many of us have currently budgeted based on this extra money. If the governor then decides to cut us again, I for one will have to consider relocation. In areas like Hamakua coast, the rents are incredibly high and make it hard for single people to work there. Even if you have to make them less, we would appreciate you considering this in your decision.

Gmail

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

Sped differentials for teachers

Brian Hart <bhart289@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 5:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha.
I am a sped teacher on the Big Island and am writing the board to please not vote to take away the differential and hard to staff location assistance. Teachers worked so hard to get this for us. This money was one reason why I chose to stay in this line. Please know this is very important to me and my family. The cost of living is so high here in Hawaii. This help makes it more possible. Please vote to keep this differential for sped teachers. Thanks for your consideration.

Brian Hart
Kanu o ka Aina
--
Mahalo,
Brian Hart

Gmail

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

Sped Differiantials

Carol Esquibel <carol.esquibel@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 5:09 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sirs

I would like to thank you for the Sped differential, I was finally able to secure an apt to buy if you take this extra pay away it may determine whether my husband and I can continue to purchase this home. I know we live in uncertain times right now but do not penalize teachers that work very hard to secure the education of students with disabilities.

During the school shut down many of us purchased worksheets and materials so our students could continue to be engaged in their education on google classrooms and packets. These materials were purchased out of the pockets of the teachers. We also worked very hard to give students their individual minutes set out by their IEPs. Sometimes this would mean waiting for caregivers and essential workers to come home from work. I know my day finished way over office hours. Why? I care, I'm an educator.

Sped teachers are particularly in demand and are hard to keep on the island. I fear if you take this away there will be influx of Sped positions open, therefore opening the door for lawsuits against the Hawaii Dept of Education because you will be filling these positions with unqualified teachers.

Please find another way to find funds...here are a few suggestions.

* Raise sales tax by 1-2 cents.
* Presently cut staff that are participating in physical sports and music or band because of the spray of the Covid 19 virus.

Let's be real contact sports and music cannot happen because of Covid 19 until there is a vaccine or turn around of the virus these cannot happen. You are jeopardizing the parents, grandparents, teachers and coaches if these extracurricular programs are allowed. This is not forever just till there is a control of the virus or a vaccine.

I don't know how you will accomplish this but I know you should not penalize teachers especially SPED. We are in the frontline of students that have to learn to social distance, wear masks, wash hands and learn to be kind to their school community.

Thank you for ALL your efforts in keeping teachers and students safe as we return to school.

Carol Esquibel
SPED teacher
Campbell-Kapolei Complex

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Testimony

Jessica Sill <jessica.sill@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 5:44 PM

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Thursday, July 23, 2020 1:30p.m.

II. Public Testimony on Board of Education Agenda Item. Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year

I am a kindergarten teacher who has taught for 15 years, 3 and a half of those have been at King Kamehameha III Elementary school in Lahaina..

It is already challenging enough to kind a second job at this time to supplement my salary. I spend much of my salary supplementing the diet for several students and their families at our school. Rent in our state and particularly this area is outrageously expensive. As a teacher here, it is very challenging to make ends even meet. The idea of pay cuts to our dedicated teachers during a time when we will actually be putting in more hours than usual because of the distance and virtual learning, not to mention putting our lives in danger, just doesn't make sense. I hope that you will reconsider.

Mahalo,

Jessica Sill

Kindergarten Teacher

King Kamehameha III Elementary

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Effective immediately, my email account is jessica.sill@k12.hi.us. Lotus Notes account (jessica_sill@notes.k12.hi.us) is no longer available and will not be checked.

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

Loss of differential

THOMAS MERINGOLO <tmeringolo@mac.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 5:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

NO NO NO! Do your job! Honor your agreement. Write some grants like we all have to do because we're underfunded. Hold a press conference and pressure DeVoss. This time is hard for us all - you want to be leaders, then LEAD.

Sent from my iPhone

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

Do not cut differentials

Taylor Edwards <tne@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:13 PM

Aloha. Please do not cut differentials. The logic that asserted its necessity is still 100% valid. In fact, the need for it is more critical than ever now. The impact on the pandemic puts stress on teachers and other eligible differential recipients even more so now. As many of Hawai'i's teachers are imported from the mainland, it is foreseeable that some may leave the island for losing the differential incentive. This would only result in exponentially MUCH MORE money being spent recruiting more teachers to Hawai'i from the mainland, paying recruitment agent's transportation fees, recruitment event fees, relocation fees, and emergency fund fees to get those teachers here. It is painfully obvious this is a futile and wasteful use of Hawai'i's DOE money. HIDOE money should be spent on incentive for local teachers. Instead of recruitment and losing money over the disloyalty of mainland teachers with licenses, hire more local Hawai'i teachers on Emergency permits and fund/support alternative SATEP credentialling like iTeach for long-term loyal Hawai'i highly qualified teachers. Use differential incentive. Save money, and invest in differential payment incentives and local people!

Gmail

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

Schools are NOT ready to open for face to face!

Heather G <okinawa334@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a parent of 3 and a teacher. I 100% feel that it is unsafe to open school with a face to face option. We should follow what other states are doing by beginning all online and gradually to hybrid and then full-time.

My children will NOT be going into the classroom on August 4th.

Heather Gostage

"It doesn't matter if the glass is half empty or half full. Be thankful that

you have a glass and grateful that there's something in it." ~Unknown

Gmail

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

continue funding for teacher shortage differentials

manifestaloha@yahoo.com <manifestaloha@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

Please continue funding for teacher shortage differentials. These differentials worked and especially during these times, teachers are leaving the field.
On Dec. 5, Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. The BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages.

Also during the meeting, Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

This new proposal breaks that pledge. The HIDOE said the Legislature did not approve funding for the differentials as requested. It is now opting to suspend this compensation instead of looking at other areas of its operating budget, as originally promised.

Mahalo

Katherine Roseguo

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jenna Fettig <jennafettig@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am writing to encourage the BOE to continue funding shortage differentials. Hawaii struggles each year due to a teaching shortage. The impacts resulting from cutting teachers' differentials would be devastating to campuses across the state. The most disheartening effect would be that on the keiki.

A cut in differentials would drive senior teachers to retire early, those who returned to special education/ hard to staff schools and young licensed teachers to look for work elsewhere. Keiki would be left in the classroom with unlicensed teachers year after year, which will cause devastating results to their achievement and success.

I, as well as many other teachers, live paycheck to paycheck due to the high costs of living here in Hawaii and the current state of teachers' salaries. My husband was born and raised here, his family still lives here, and I hope to remain here to raise my family. With losing the special education differential I do not see how this will be possible. I love my job as a special education teacher, the pay differential has helped not only financially but compensates us, special education teachers, for all the time we spend writing individualized education plans, meetings for our students and families, and other special education-related duties not performed by general education teachers. By discontinuing our differential, this will only cause a bigger shortage of licensed special education teachers in our classrooms. Our special needs keiki will need us the most upon returning to school. I have no doubt our special education teachers will work tirelessly to fill in these education gaps and work to get our keiki back on track.

I urge you to consider the critical teacher shortage, the already existing shortage of licensed special education teachers, the future of school and teacher leadership, and our growing keiki when considering how to allocate funds.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jenna Bachmann
7th-grade special education math/science teacher, Wheeler Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

Pay Differentials

Nathan Krahn <nathan.krahn@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Pay differentials are a way to provide incentives to teachers in especially hard to staff areas, like special education. As a special education teacher it is a huge incentive for me to teach special education, and keep coming to work even with the added risk, health wise and legally, that the current pandemic brings. Please keep the pay differentials for teachers who are in high need areas, we need them as much as the department needs us.
Sincerely,

Nathan Krahn
Special Education Teacher
Radford High School
(808) 421-4200 Ext. 298

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

Differential

Ember Freitas <emberfreitas@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm requesting that the differential for Special Education teachers be continued as is. As a new Special Education teacher I work significantly longer hours than my general education counter parts. I have spent over $2,000 of my own money during this closure preparing for my new role in Special Education. The $10,000 is a drop the the bucket compared to what I spend in time, resources, supplies and professional development to service this population. This has all been done on my general education teacher salary with the expectation that the state would be providing this differential to me since I agreed to teach this hard to staff position. The state can not afford to loose certified Special education teachers by taking away this differential and that will likely happen. You're asking teachers to do quadruple the work for less pay which will end up causing us to work multiple jobs and lessen the quality of teaching these exceptional learners need. I don't have the ability to work another job as I am the parent of 2 children with special needs. You are not only going to be taking away from me but my students and my children. You want certified special education teachers in these positions? Keep the differential. You will be hurting the teachers, students and schools as a whole by taking it away. Unacceptable.

Gmail

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

Schools are NOT ready to open face to face!

Heather Gostage <heather.gostage@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a parent of 3 and a teacher. I 100% feel that it is unsafe to open school with a face to face option. We should follow what other states are doing by beginning all online and gradually to hybrid and then full-time.

My children will NOT be going into the classroom on August 4th.

In addition, I find it absurd that I am to teach a hybrid class while also teaching to students that chose all online. That is double duty. I do not have a virtual curriculum to just hand out. I will TEACHING my distant learners. How am I to provide quality teaching if I am so overwhelmed with 2 teaching jobs. Some schools gave teachers the option to teach only online or only in the classroom. James Campbell High School did not!

Oh and the reason quarter 4 was not a success was that it was not graded. My seniors that took my .5 Sociology course during quarter 4 all passed! This course was required for them to graduate and all work was graded. They did such a wonderful job!

Respectfully,
Heather Gostage
James Campbell High School
Social Studies Teacher
M-104
305-3798

"It doesn't matter if the glass is half empty or half full. Be thankful that you have a glass and grateful that there's something in it." ~Unknown

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

Differentials

Dr. Phaedra Robinson <drphaedra@me.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. I hope this finds you all as well as can be right now.
I am a veteran teacher here in Hawaii- since 1998.
Despite the low salary

With aloha,
Phaedra Elisabeth Robinson, Ph.D.

Gmail

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

shortage differentials

Leigh Hicks <leighrunning@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
Please continue to fund shortage differentials in special education. I have worked as a special educator on Kauai since 2005, and over the years seen the direct impacts on students who are underserved due to a lack of qualified special educators. Incentivizing the position is critical to fulfilling these vacancies. A dual certified colleague of mine elected to move from general education classroom to special education as a result of the differentials, and now may not benefit from the promise.

I also have school aged children, including a daughter who has Down syndrome. Our school was understaffed with qualified special education teachers last year, and she was directly impacted as a result.

Please continue to support the teachers who support the students who are most vulnerable.

Thank you,
Leigh Hicks

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Differential Pays-Please dont cut our checks!

Fia Emerson <fia.emerson@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not drop the differential pay. I rely heavily on my paychecks to pay Bill's and feed my family. This cut in pay would further cause me to reconsider my career choices.

Henrietta Emerson

Gmail

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

Differential pay

Amy Stevenson <amyjotuttle@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please strongly consider not dropping our differentials. This is a triple affect on teachers. Due to shortages our caseloads are larger than manageable. Our pay helps us balance out all the extra hours we put in for IEP meetings, paperwork and IEP documentation. We will loose a massive amount of teachers if we cut this from their pay. The stress alone in this job is a reason to seek employment elsewhere. Teachers can not function on this pay and this level of stress. We will end up in Multiple law suits and grievances made by teachers if this happens. Look what happened with Felix. The state was forced to spend way more money than this to fix the shortage issues.
Thanks for listening.

Gmail

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

Please Maintain Differentials for Teachers

Harmony Seivert <hseivert@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the members of the Hawai'i Board of Education:

I urge you to oppose agenda item G; the discontinuance of differentials for hard-to-fill areas and special education teachers.

I work at Waimea Elementary School where teachers receive the hard-to-fill differential. Two of our seasoned teachers chose to retire rather than face the challenges of reopening schools during a pandemic. We have at least 4 teaching positions to fill, and I'm not sure how we'll get qualified teachers in time for school to start, especially if there's no differential to entice teachers to our area.

I am also a special education teacher, with 17 years of experience. The special education differential was what kept me in the special education classroom this coming year, after a particularly challenging group of students. My husband's jobs are both tied to tourism and when unemployment runs out in August, my paycheck will be the only thing keeping my family afloat financially. Finding new work is difficult because my husband will be watching our 3 kids half the week while I return to campus to teach. If my pay is cut, we simply cannot afford to stay in this state.

I know you have difficult decisions right now, but I urge you to look for other options. Cutting teacher differentials will put our public schools back even further. We have had many special education parents with concerns due to school closures, we've got federal mandates to uphold, and we'll have another Felix-level crisis on our hands if we have long term subs trying to fill vacancies.

Please oppose the discontinuance of differentials.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Harmony Seivert
Waimea Elementary School
Gr 5 Special Education Teacher, MA, NBCT

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mark Tanaka <mark.tanaka@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:25 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying in Action Item G: Board Action on Temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Mark Tanaka and I currently work at Kipapa Elementary School as. Special Education teacher. If you discontinue to extra compensation it will definitely impact many people. For me I recently became a Dad for the first time, so having a little extra definitely helps with my family. As you know it's already challenging to find teachers, but based on information shared there are more sped teachers coming into this school year then last school year in hard to staff areas. If you decide to go back on your word it will definitely hurt those teachers along with others who may start to think that becoming a teacher isn't a path to take, because people can't stand by their word. Please rethink this action, because we are in different times, however just really think about the impact this will cause on not just the many families who have parents that are teachers, but also the children who may be in classes with people who are not qualified.

Thank you
Mark Tanaka

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

Reject Proposal to Defer Teacher Shortage Differentials

Steve A <ansley.stephen@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,

I urge that you reject the DOE's proposal to defer the teacher shortage differentials. These differentials ensure that highly qualified teachers remain in these hard to staff areas and that their pay reflects the extra challenges of their positions.

I'm a teacher that works with students at HYCF through Olomana School. Nearly every year we have vacancies because of the challening working conditions that come with working with incarcerated youth. Many of these students also require special education services which makes some positions even more difficult to fill. The teacher shortage differential encourages teachers to stay in these hard to staff positions instead of seeking a more traditional teaching position.

I beg you to reject the DOE's proposal so that our students can have the best qualified teachers possible during these difficult and unprecedented times.

Sincerely,
Stephen Ansley

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

School Reopening Concerns

Tami Sego <tjsego1@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 4:01 PM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Hawaii Board of Education Members,

I'd like to start by thanking you for the work you have done this summer to plan for the safe reopening of our Hawaii public schools. I am sure it has not been easy trying to balance the scientific and medical informations with student and teacher health and safety. I appreciate the board changing the 3 feet distancing requirement to 6 feet distancing, and for supporting the use of masks. Mahalo for listening to teacher concerns and for acting on our behalf.

The safety measures that HSTA advocated for on behalf of our school community and that your board supported are the first step to ensuring student and educator/staff health and safety. With the rising Covid cases on Oahu, I feel more needs to be done to further safeguard our students and staff. Oahu now has more daily cases than when we transitioned to distance learning in March. I feel we are rushing to reopen based on a date that was set prior to any of us knowing anything about a pending pandemic.

I'd like to ask the Board to consider delaying students' start date by 2 weeks so teachers can receive proper training on effective distance learning as well as time to plan as a team, so we are well prepared the changes that are bound to occur this school year with the pandemic. I'd would also like the Board to consider utilizing a phased-in school reopening plan, similar to other state's school plans. During this time when multiple cases are reported daily (higher than we saw in March), Phase 1- distance learning for all. Once case numbers come down and are stable, Phase 2- similar to the current plan (A/B schedule or hybrid/blended). And when there is a vaccine or no new cases for several weeks, then Phase 3- full reopening. There also needs to be a transparent plan in place for school closures and transparency in reporting school Covid cases to the school's parents and public. I am fearful cases will not be transparent. Cases of head lice are not even shared with parents of students in the class being impacted, so it makes me wonder how cases of Covid will be shared with parents.

I am an elementary teacher at an Oahu public school, and I am fearful of getting sick. I am in my 50's, and while I have no pre-existing conditions, I would like to err on the side of caution instead of rushing back to school. I became a teacher because I love kids, and I want nothing more than to teach my students face-to-face. But with the rising cases on Oahu, I am concerned for the health and safety of my students, my colleagues and my family. Numbers of reported Covid cases are higher now than when this started in March. Why are we rushing back to reopen? I am appealing to you to please consider a phased in option and a delay to student start date so all teachers can be properly trained and allowed time to plan for distance learning. Many teachers spent their unpaid summer to plan and learn on their own, but now it's time to come together as a school to ensure equity for all students.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and suggestions. Your time and consideration is appreciated.

Respectfully,
Tami

To Whom it May Concern-

I am writing this letter in regards to my opposition in the public school system starting in August. I feel that the start date should be pushed back to September.

The first reason why I feel this way is because of the current uptick in the numbers of Covid 19 cases throughout the state. This is purely a common sense point, as I have no idea how it is justifiable to open schools up when the numbers are this high when in March, the school system and the state decided to completely shut down based on a count that was much smaller. Now, one could argue that a big reason why schools are opening up again is because parents need to go back to work. Although this statement SHOULD not hold any merit, because the purpose of a school was never to be a babysitter for children, it's a reality. However, with that said, what good will it do our economy, or children, our teachers, or our elderly if the spread BECAUSE of the schools starting up is so great that the state is forced to completely shut down again. I watched Olelo yesterday and saw how Dr.PARK went on and on about kids staying in "their bubbles" and how, if they did so, it would be safe. To me, this is nonsense. If Dr.PARK or any of the other leaders that were at that meeting have ever went to a public school during school hours, they would see how this "bubble" theory will not work and does not stand a chance. Kids will run around and play in groups bigger than their "bubble" because of a number of reasons ranging from a lack of adequate spacing, teachers who are forced to monitor more children than is reasonable, teachers not diligently watching the children because it's not in their contract, and most notably, children wanting to play with others even when they are told not to do so(in other words, children being children).

The other issue that is bothering me with schools opening up in August is how bad of a job the DOE and BOE has done in assuring parents that rooms will be clean and sanitary. To put more bluntly, how the two departments have not done anything to ensure to parents and teachers that the rooms will be as sanitary as possible. Teachers cannot be expected to clean their rooms on their own several reasons. First off, it is not in their contract to do so. Plain and simple. Second, as several teachers have pointed out in the Olelo Meeting yesterday via email, they were never trained on how to clean a classroom properly. Now here are two different scenarios that are going to play out as a result of this:

The first scenario is that teachers will take the attitude of "it's not in my contract so I am not going to do it. More so, the DOE has stated that the janitorial staff will be working to clean rooms more thoroughly, so I'll just rely on that". Unless each school has increased their janitorial staff twentyfold, I don't see how they have the ability to clean a room thoroughly and ensure that it is sanitary for the students. Restaurants sanitize tables after each patron has left their tables. Although children are not eating off their tables, they still do things like touch their faces and mouths. Unless each school has one janitor per 2-3 classrooms, sanitizing each classroom after each period or break will simply not happen. What will happen after that is that children will get each other, and most likely their teacher, sick, and we will spiral out of control from there.

The second scenario is if a teacher takes the opposite approach and decides to clean their classroom on their own. Being that they will first have to buy their own supplies out of their own pockets, they were never trained by the DOE in how to properly disinfect things. Now say that a teacher disinfects their room with a ratio of bleach that is not according to specifications and that the children come in to the room and get sick from either touching the improperly ratio bleached desktops or inhaling the fumes. Parents will be called to pick their sick children up from school, wherein they will question how their

child got sick. What will happen when they find out that the teacher had improperly sanitized the classrooms with methods that were not approved by the DOE? Will the teachers be okay with getting sued? Will the State and DOE be okay with getting sued as well?

Now, the question that I would expect to be asked by whoever is reading this is "What is your solution to this problem?". Simple. Delay the opening of schools until September, as long as the numbers go down to pre-Forth of July and pre-Protest numbers. Delaying the opening would not only allow the numbers to go down, but would also give the DOE more time in adequately training teachers on how to clean and sanitize rooms. I understand that it is not in their contract to do so, but if the state maybe came up with a voluntary training that teachers could partake in, and maybe have them sign some kind of form saying that they participated in the training and thus would waive them from liability if anything happened because of the sanitizing, then it would lead to cleaner rooms and a safer environment for our children.

The attitude that the DOE seems to be taking in the whole reopening of schools is the same ineffective attitude that all the leaders of this state seem to take with Covid 19. They "hope" for parents to be vigilant in monitoring the health of their children and rely on the "aloha" factor in parents doing the right thing in keeping their kids home if they are sick. It is nice to hope for things and the aloha factor is always a point-getter in Hawaii. However, it's not reality. The reality is that parents will send their children to school when they are sick, whether intentional or not. Children will get sick and spread the virus to each other, they will not only stick to getting sick on weekends (like how the lady in the black sweater kept hoping for in her response to how to curb the in-school spread during the Olelo meeting). The one sentence truth is that if school starts in 2 weeks, our children will get sick, our state will see the highest Covid numbers that we have ever seen, and it all rests on the shoulders of the DOE and BOE because of improper planning. Thank you for taking the time in reading this letter.

Clint Ono

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

close schools, please

ivy collis <ivycollis@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:22 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Please DO NOT re-open schools yet. Sincerely, Ivy Collis

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Julia Davison <julia.davison@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:40 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE, do I need to say it? There is a teacher shortage right now. Right before Coronavirus it was time for us to true up our salaries from when we were furloughed in the Lingle administration. We have already lost that. Now, we are asked to be frontline workers, at risk of dying each and every day. Now you/they want us to become miracle workers, somehow teaching distance-learning while we deliver in class instruction at the same time??? Much pressure is put on teachers and principals to hurriedly open schools without clear directives, proper PPE, and any distance learning training AT ALL (despite what Kishimoto said)—-and we have to deal with parents that decide that they do or do not like our mask policy! How are we rewarded? We are provided with no childcare for our own children, while we watch the kids in the community around us! In addition, you/they?? want to nix our differentials for being in hard to staff schools???? Talk of paycuts and getting rid of our differentials when we should be truing up our salaries that we already lost due to the pandemic ????!!!! Are you kidding me??? This will not look good to the parents or the news media and many teachers will absolutely quit and you/they will have a hard time recruiting teachers from the mainland by showing them how they can get all their homework done on the beach! We put ourselves at risk every day and we work so hard because we love the children of our communities—-but we feel like we are being totally taken advantage of and kicked around and bullied!

SPEd teacher

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July 18, 2020

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

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is [redacted] and I am an elementary school teacher. I have taught in multiple grades (fourth, second, and now third grade). School Year 2020-2021 will only be my third year of teaching; however, I've been working in the school system even before my career had taken off, first at a charter school and then as a long-term sub. Within this short amount of time I've worked in the Hawaii school system, I've experienced a variety of arduous situations of varying degrees; however, I never thought that my job would put my students, my family and co-workers in danger. It's an unfair situation that all teachers, not only myself, face with the opening of schools looming over the horizon. I wanted to share my perspective of why I strongly disagree with some points supporting our return to school that were brought up during the most recent Senate hearing on July 17, 2020.

First of all, we are not ready. At the Senate hearing, Superintendent Kishimoto stated that teachers were trained and ready to come back to school. There is a misunderstanding that teachers have been trained. The only trainings I have received are the ones I've been scrambling to sign up for on my own time during my summer break. There have been no formal trainings for teachers since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak. I am frustrated that it has been taking so long for trainings to be held for all teachers, not just the select few who were lucky enough to sign up. Now with only 2 weeks remaining, we are expected to go to war without basic training; expected to survive on our own. We need training before the students start so that the 9 half-days can be used more effectively. Those half days will be extremely important in setting up our protocols and classroom expectations whether online or in-person. Without training, we are just guessing and hypothesizing what will work best for our students. This is not good enough when we have lost so much schooling already. Without quality teacher training before we begin this next school year, we are setting ourselves up for mediocrity and more wasted time and effort.

Since it is not feasible to be trained in such a short time before the teachers start on July 30th, I support the idea of postponing the start date of school by a few weeks. School is not going to be the same and learning will take more time than usual; that much we know. Thus, it is important that we provide quality instruction from the start to maximize the effectiveness of our time with students. On one hand, we can start school on time with no training, which will lead to heightened stress and teachers teaching in survival mode. On the other hand, although we would have to push back school a few weeks for quality teacher training, students will be getting a quality experience when teachers feel more prepared and safe.

During the Senate hearing the superintendent also stated that the successful protocols in place during the summer program were good indicators justifying reopening our schools this fall. Comparing the program in the summer to school starting in the fall is like comparing apples and oranges. Colleagues that taught summer school under these protocols agree that the program was

successful, but noted significant differences. Their class sizes consisted of two adults with a maximum of 8 students- most times even less due to inconsistency in attendance. When my school returns in the fall, each general education classroom will be led by one teacher with half of the students (around 15 students) in person while also providing distance learning opportunities for the other half of the class. Looking at a whole school picture comparison- we had 50 students total during the summer as compared to the 1,000 that we expect in the fall with less staff. Not only are class sizes going to be different as compared to summer school, but the amount of student "ohana bubbles" they are exposed to will also increase. In summer school, our students did not have lunch in the cafeteria. In summer school, our students did not have to ride the bus. When they are exposed to these other ohana bubbles, they are at a higher risk. How can we say our protocols will be successful if we are comparing two different situations?

Anything less than 6 feet is unacceptable. When 6 feet is the rule of thumb everywhere else: the grocery store, doctor's offices, etc., why are schools any different? Our situations can sometimes be worse depending on the schools reopening plans and layout of our rooms. For example, our classrooms have poor ventilation and there are also plans to fill these classes with what the school deems to be appropriate (not what health professionals deem safe). Some schools will not be mandating masks for certain grades. How can only 3 feet distance be acceptable in schools when 6 feet distance is required within our community businesses?

In addition to that, schools are able to ask for exemptions to this 6 feet distancing rule. At my school, administration is pushing for 4 ½ feet of distance between desks in our kindergarten classrooms with the rationale that 6 feet of spacing will affect the integrity of our curriculum which requires a lot of student discourse. In my opinion, we should not be prioritizing our curriculum over student and teacher safety. If we have the opportunity to save one life, whether it is one of our students, a teacher or even a family member of one of our students or teachers, we need to take it. Any talk about distances less than 6 feet undermines the agreement between the Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association and gives school administration opportunities to decrease the space between student desks, which endangers our community.

Lastly, schools have not been given enough time to plan with all stakeholders input. Our administration has been working needlessly hard to keep coming up with new plans within just these last few weeks. In class, it is a common best practice to allow students wait time so students have more time to think deeply about their response. Although we are adults, we also need wait time. We need the time to think and discuss about what our options are and which of those options would be best for keeping our school community safe. As of right now, parents at my school have not been notified of our detailed plans. We are still waiting for the results of our waiver for 4 ½ feet. We don't have our bell schedule. We don't know what grades we will be teaching. We don't have our class lists. The parent survey indicating their preference of online versus face-to-face hasn't been fully completed by our families. And we have not been able to have a deep discussion with all parties about how we want our school to open up. We need to know these things and have these discussions to move forward. Schools have been put in a hard situation because of this and it strains relationships between our teachers, administration and families.

At my current school, we live by a saying, “Team first, me last”. Teachers are an integral part of our educational team here in Hawaii, along with the administration, students, families, Board of Education, etc. Although I miss teaching in the regular setting, we are not teaching in normal situations during this pandemic. I need to put my feelings of wanting to go back to normalcy aside and take care of all members of the team. The rushed decisions being made right now protect no one and that needs to change. I’m hoping that by writing this letter, the Board of Education will consider giving all teachers formal training before school begins and also think about postponing the start of school so that we are armed with the knowledge we need to create safe spaces for our students to succeed. We need more time to discuss at all levels to ensure the safety of our teachers and all parties that are involved, as well as time to share a complete and thoughtful plan for this school year with our students and families.

I’m writing to you in confidence so please don’t share my name with anyone. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Defund Special Education, Hawaiian language immersion educators & hard to staff schools

Debbie, <debbieng555@hawaiiantel.net> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Debra Ng and I am a retired elementary teacher as of December 2019. I retired with 36 years of service including doing part time teaching prior to my full time assignments due to lack of teaching positions when I graduated. My years of service includes Kaewai Elementary (PTT) and Roosevelt HS (PTT), Kawananakoa summer school, Lana'i Elementary and High school as a Title I full time elementary teacher (1yr),Kokohead Elementary (1yr), Makaha Elementary (3 yrs), and finally Princess Miriam K. Likelike Elementary (31yrs). I've been richly experienced with all the schools I've taught and have learned so much culturally, mentored by wonderful seasoned educators, and learned that teaching is not just teaching.

After retiring I had (even presently) the opportunity to go back to Likelike Elementary to teach music appreciation/ukulele and start up a robotic program spearheaded by Art Kimura. My learning and teaching continued(s) on with anticipation, happiness and expectations.

This January I was appalled that only a selected group of teachers were given a tremendous raise without thorough research and consideration. I asked why was this done? I never got an increase in pay in my "hard to staff school" as in Lana'i and Makaha! All teachers should be treated equally. This increase in salary to a select group of teachers made the regular education teachers very upset since we work just as hard as this select group...if not harder. Why sped teaches? Who does all the observations, data collection, assessments, pre-paper work, accommodations, communicating with the parents and extra work with expected sped students? The regular education teacher. So the sped teachers think they have a lot of paper work, well so do we...pre and post sped.

This raise in salary to this select group of teachers just divided the teachers. Now regular Ed teachers feel that the sped teachers should do all the pre observations, contacting the parents, accommodations and assessments.

When we as educators decided to be educators, it wasn't for the money but for the love of teaching and seeing our students grow, enjoy learning and become lifelong learners who will be positive contributors to our community and society.

As our world changes daily right in front of our eyes....loss of jobs, cutting positions, furloughs, decrease in pay/salaries...surely it's obvious that this select group of teachers should give up their increase of pay that was awarded to them in January. For one, I feel it was not equal since regular Ed teachers got shafted and placed way in the back. It's seems like we were not worth as much. Especially when regular education teachers often times see sped teachers with as little a 2-3 students for only 3 hours and have NO students in their class in the afternoon. They make no initiative on their part to assist or offer to help the regular education teacher. This may not be at all schools but this is what I've witnessed for 25 years. I do know of some sped teachers at others schools who do reach out to help the regular education teachers.

Yes, nothing is equal but during this hardship with budget cuts and less money to spend or to go around, defunding this special group of teachers who were awarded a raise in January seems most appropriate.

Mahalo and thank you for your time and consideration.
Debra Ng
Retired educator

Sent from my iPad

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Keep my Kids safe at HOME

amiehyshiah@gmail.com <amiehyshiah@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 12:09 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

https://www.facebook.com/100001842818176/posts/4129407170464003/?d=n

COVID 19 is real and sooooo close to home. Just imagine he is a 5 years old kid who is force to go to school by the BOE who don't know any better!!!!!

VIRUS DO TRAVEL MORE THAN 6 FEET

Do no use my kid as a test subject, people will sue if unfortunately a fatality happen because of the reopening of schools. They are young kid who will have elderly grandparents as care takers.
The 2 most dangerous groups of people.

PLEASE keep my kid safe at home!!!!!! Push back reopening of schools!!!!!!!!

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

reopening of schools.

teresa barnett <kittensrun4life@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:09 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, ryamanaka@hsta.org

Aloha,
My name is Teresa Barnett-Wright and I am a special education teacher at Pahoa Elementary School. After a lot of thought, I have decided that I will not be staying on as a special education teacher if I do not feel it is safe in a classroom setting.

This year, I am being placed in a very stressful position as a special education teacher. In addition, I will also be in an unsafe situation as I will be required to share a classroom with another special education teacher—who will be working in three different classrooms. I will be working in multiple classrooms and do not see how contract tracing will work if so many students and teachers are required to come in contact with each other. I would rather take my retirement out and look at opening my own private school if the public school can not follow the 6 feet distancing guidelines and mask requirements. My reality is if I do get sick and do not have the differential to help cover my medical bills and copayments, I will not be able to afford them. If this happens, I can not afford to remain on as a teacher for the DOE.

Although I love working with students and teaching is my passion, I could not live with myself if one of my students or one of their family members passes away because their child caught COVID-19 in my classroom. Opening schools without proper precautions is a huge risk that I am not willing to take.

Please do not take away our differential and make sure the 6 feet distancing and mask requirements are strictly followed or please push back the school year until the number of COVID-19 cases starts to decline throughout our country.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Teresa Barnett-Wright

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

how cutting Differentials impact vacancy: the Substitute Teacher Gap

Stephenie Blakemore <stephenie.blakemore@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:22 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Cut differentials=less credentialed teachers doing the teaching

At least one of you should be a member of the Council for Exceptional Children, CEC and start learning about special education and what the discussions are about funding, teacher shortages, teacher retention, and teacher supports.

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TheSubstituteTeacherGap.pdf
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EdWeek Research Center

Kelly Education

— Tomertu/Getty

The Substitute Teacher Gap: Recruitment and Retention Challenges in the Age of Covid-19

Executive Summary

An increase in teacher absences and the need to fill more positions than ever before have created a new set of challenges in the world of substitute teacher recruitment and retention. In December of 2019 and January of 2020, the EdWeek Research Center explored these challenges with a nationally representative, online survey of more than 2,000 principals, district leaders, and school board members. Survey results suggest that the challenge is big and getting bigger: Districts are currently able to fill just 54 percent of the approximately 250,000 teacher absences each day, the survey found. Yet substitute teachers are increasingly being tapped to fill positions as the number of vacancies is on the rise. The situation is only expected to get more challenging as most administrators and school board members predict the need for substitutes to increase. One reason is that teacher absence rates have risen. Millennials who have replaced retiring Boomers enter their child-bearing years, meaning they are more likely to need maternity leave and/or time off to care for sick children. Another reason is the Covid-19, which is expected to recur in waves over the next year. This may create additional shortages as educators with health problems stay home even if schools remain open, and those who fall ill during closures need substitute teachers who can assume their responsibilities. There is much uncertainty around the future education landscape but what is certain is the fact that substitute educators, either in-person or remote-base, will be in demand.

The majority of administrators and school board members say

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that it would help to increase substitute teacher pay, which currently hovers around $100 a day for a job that often requires a bachelor's degree. However, they also say they'd need to boost their rates by a minimum of 26 percent in order to get results. Given the reality of school budgets, that might not be feasible, especially since most survey respondents say that, once inflation is taken into account, substitute teacher pay has not increased in the past five years. In addition, the economic downturn linked to the pandemic is already having a detrimental effect on district budgets.

While the downturn may temporarily make substitute teaching more attractive as unemployment rates rise, that situation will likely change when the economy recovers. The paper concludes with potential solutions including professional development, better recruitment and retention, and "grow-your-own" programs that encourage students, paraprofessionals, parents, and others to become teachers.

While the downturn may temporarily make substitute teaching more attractive as unemployment rates rise, that situation will likely change when the economy recovers.

Introduction

As schools re-open in the wake of Covid-19 closures, educators may find themselves with a changing and growing challenge: Teacher and substitute teacher recruitment and retention are changing rapidly and have entered a new era.

Enrollment in teacher preparation programs has declined by one third over the past decade. Yet the number of teaching positions has increased by 64 percent since the late 1980s. Researchers project that teacher demand will exceed supply by more than 110,000 positions annually for the foreseeable future. Short-term substitute teaching positions in particular have been difficult to fill as they typically pay around $100 daily for a job that does not usually provide benefits and often requires a bachelor's degree.

Combined, these factors have created the perfect storm of challenges for school and district leaders seeking to staff their classrooms with well-prepared teachers.

In the winter of 2020, the EdWeek Research Center set out to explore these challenges by conducting a nationally representative, online survey of more than 2,000 K-12 educational leaders. Respondents included 1,454 school board members, 404 school principals, 99 school district superintendents, 61 district-level human resources officials, and 47 district-level business officers. In addition, the Center conducted in-depth phone interviews with five school board members, four district leaders, and three principals.

The results suggest strongly that educators and elected officials will face many fresh recruiting and retention challenges in the years to come but that a better understanding of the shifting landscape will help them navigate these potential pitfalls in ways that benefit students and schools.

Sizing up the Challenge

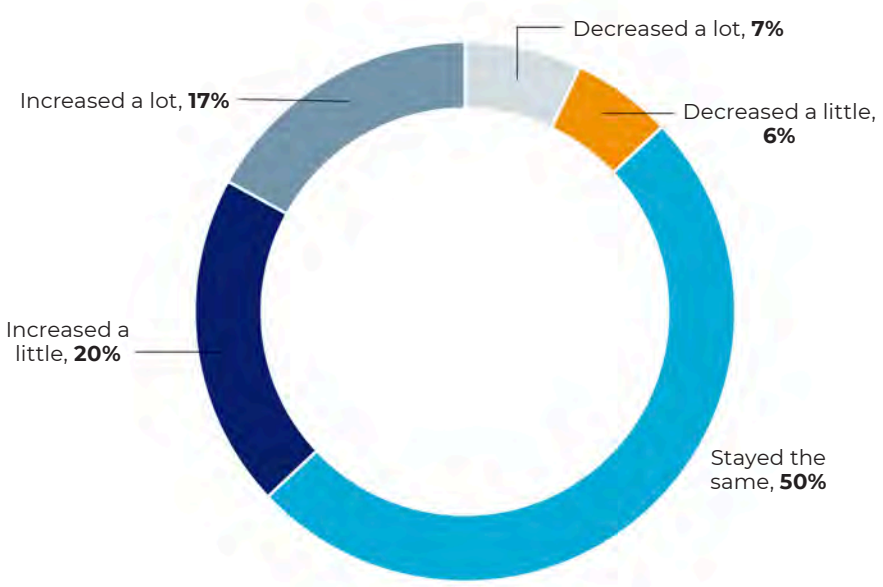
On an average school day, our findings show that eight percent of the nation's 3.2 million public school teachers are absent, leaving administrators with more than 250,000 positions to fill with substitute teachers. The positions need to be filled fast: Our survey found that the typical teacher gives just 12 hours' notice. The reality is that it is just not possible for most districts to find and

deploy enough substitute teachers to fill all their absences. On average, school and district leaders say they are able to cover just 54 percent of total absences with substitute teachers.

In the meantime, districts and schools face another challenge: The share of schools looking to fill teaching jobs increased by 11 percentage points to 79 percent between 2012 and 2016. As a result, administrators surveyed are nearly three times as likely to say that their teacher vacancy rate increased over the past five years than to say the percentage of unfilled positions declined.

The reality is that it is just not possible for most districts to find and deploy enough substitute teachers to fill all their absences.

How has your teacher vacancy rate [rate of unfilled teaching positions] changed over the past five years?



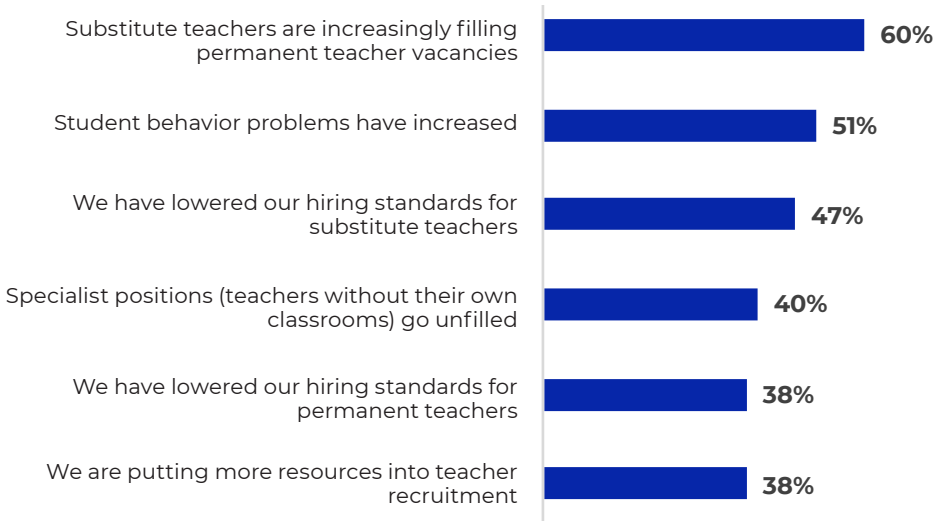
NOTE: Only school and district leaders were asked to respond to this question because it was unclear whether school board members would know the answer. "I don't know" responses were removed from the analysis.

The Connection Between Unfilled Positions and the Substitute Teacher Shortage

Unfilled teaching positions can lead to a host of outcomes, from student behavior challenges to increases in class sizes. But the number 1 most common impact of teacher vacancies is that substitute teachers are increasingly tapped to fill teacher positions.

Among administrators who report that the percentage of unfilled teaching positions has increased a lot in the past half-decade, 60 percent say that substitute teachers are increasingly filling vacancies.

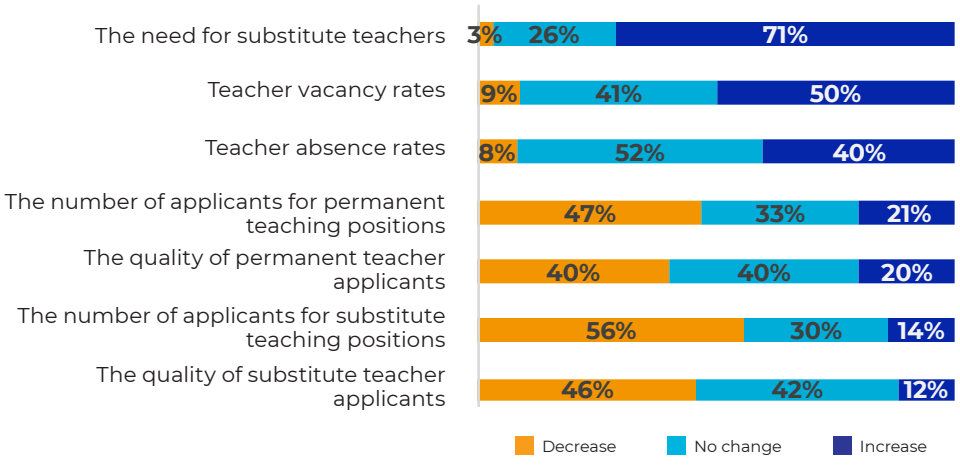
How increases in teacher vacancies impact schools



NOTE: Only school and district leaders were asked to respond to this question because it was unclear whether school board members would know the answer. This chart only includes administrators who said their teacher vacancy rates had increased a lot in the past five years. Totals do not add up to 100 percent because respondents could select more than one option. Only the five most popular options are shown in this chart. Six options are shown because two options tied for fifth place. In addition to multiple-choice options, respondents could also write in an "other" response or select a response indicating that the increase had not impacted their district.

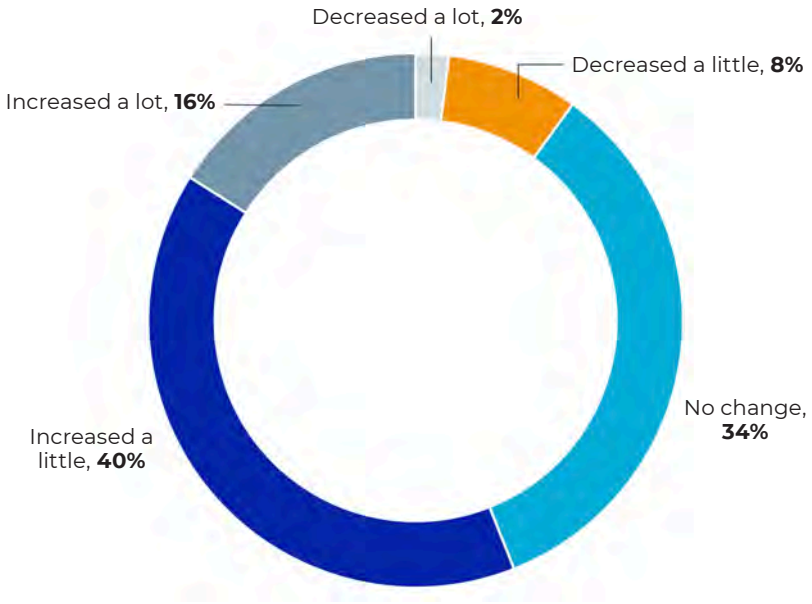
Teacher absences are helping to drive that demand: 56 percent of respondents say their teacher absence rates are higher today than they were five years ago.

In the next five years, how, if at all, do you expect the following to change in your district or school?



NOTE: Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

In the past five years, how, if at all, has your teacher absence rate changed?



More than half of school board members and administrators expect that fewer people will be applying for substitute teacher positions five years from now.

"Many of those people that we do recruit to become substitutes end up getting hired as full-time teachers, which is great," a California school board member said. "However, then we lose them on the substitute teacher roles."

In the meantime, 71 percent of administrators and school board members predict that the demand for substitute teachers will increase in the next five years.

Teacher absences are helping to drive that demand: 56 percent of respondents say their teacher absence rates are higher today than they were five years ago.

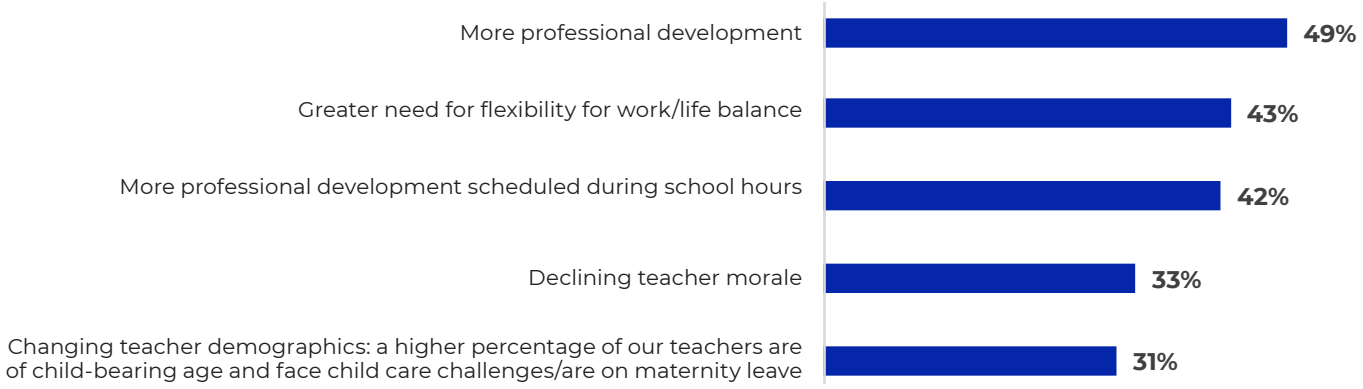
There's not much administrators can do about the number 1 reason: As Boomers have retired, they are being replaced by Millennials in their child-bearing years. As a result, more teachers are taking maternity leave or missing school to care for their own sick children.

"The state recently implemented 12-week paid maternity leave and long-term subs are not available," a high school principal in Delaware said.

In addition, Covid-19 may create a new wave of teacher absenteeism as some experts expect the virus to recur in waves over the next year. As cases spike in a particular location, teachers with health problems may need to stay home, even if school buildings remain open. And even if schools are closed, when teachers do get ill, they may need substitutes to take over their remote instructional duties.

Although administrators cannot necessarily change demographic shifts or the impact of a worldwide pandemic, they can, of course, address other causes such as teacher morale, and the scheduling of professional development during school hours.

Top 5 Reasons Why Teacher Absence Rates Have Increased



NOTE: The only respondents who received this question indicated in a prior response that their teacher absence rates had increased in the past five years. Totals do not add up to 100 percent because respondents could select more than one option. Only the five most popular options are shown in this chart. In addition to multiple-choice options, respondents could also write in an "other" response.

As the demand for substitute teachers increases, educators expect the supply to decline. More than half of school board members and administrators expect that fewer people will be applying for substitute teacher positions five years from now.

The Solution: Higher Pay?

The majority of administrators and school board members (84 percent) say substitute teachers in their districts are required to have at least some college. And 43 percent require a bachelor's degree. However, $97 a day is the median rate of pay reported by survey respondents. That's less than half of the median daily pay for college graduates in our country ($235).

"If it's someone that has children, it doesn't even pay for the cost of childcare," said a school board member in Illinois. "So, it's not even advantageous for anyone to even do it because it's too costly."

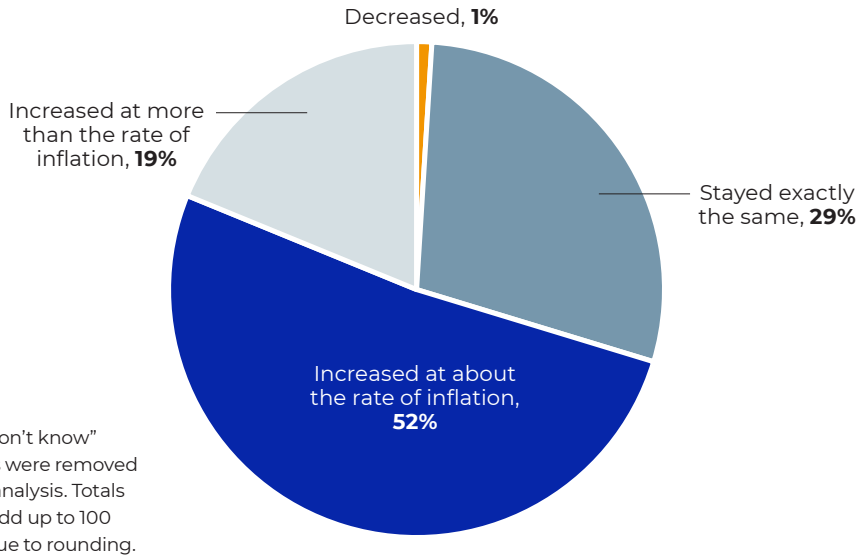
Sixty-five percent of school board members and administrators say a pay increase would improve the quality of substitute teaching in their school districts.

However, we then followed up with that 65 percent and asked: In your opinion, what is the minimum percentage pay increase your district/school would need to provide in order to increase the quality of the substitute teachers hired?

The average response? 26 percent.

Given the reality of school board budgets, 26 percent might not be feasible, especially given past realities: In fact, in the past five years, just 19 percent of survey respondents say their substitute teacher pay rates increased, taking into account inflation. As an economic downturn looms in the response to the impact of Covid-19, more than half of district leaders surveyed in April of 2020 say they have already reduced spending. More than half also expect spending to decrease in the next year.

In the past five years, how, if at all, have your substitute teacher pay rates changed?



NOTE: "I don't know" responses were removed from the analysis. Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

The Solution: Professional Development

Top Five ways to improve substitute teaching, in order of popularity

1. Higher substitute pay
2. Professional development for substitutes
3. Hiring/assigning substitutes with expertise in the field of the absent teacher
4. Improving recruitment efforts
5. Other, please specify

Even if leaders can't afford to raise salaries enough to make a difference, there's another solution:

Behind higher pay, professional development is the factor second most likely to improve substitute teaching, school board members and administrators say. It is almost certainly a less expensive solution than across-the-board salary increases.

Yet 44 percent of school board members and administrators say they currently provide no professional development to substitute teachers.

Sixty-five percent say that classroom management training would significantly improve substitute teaching in their districts or schools.

Yet only 11 percent actually offer training on that subject.

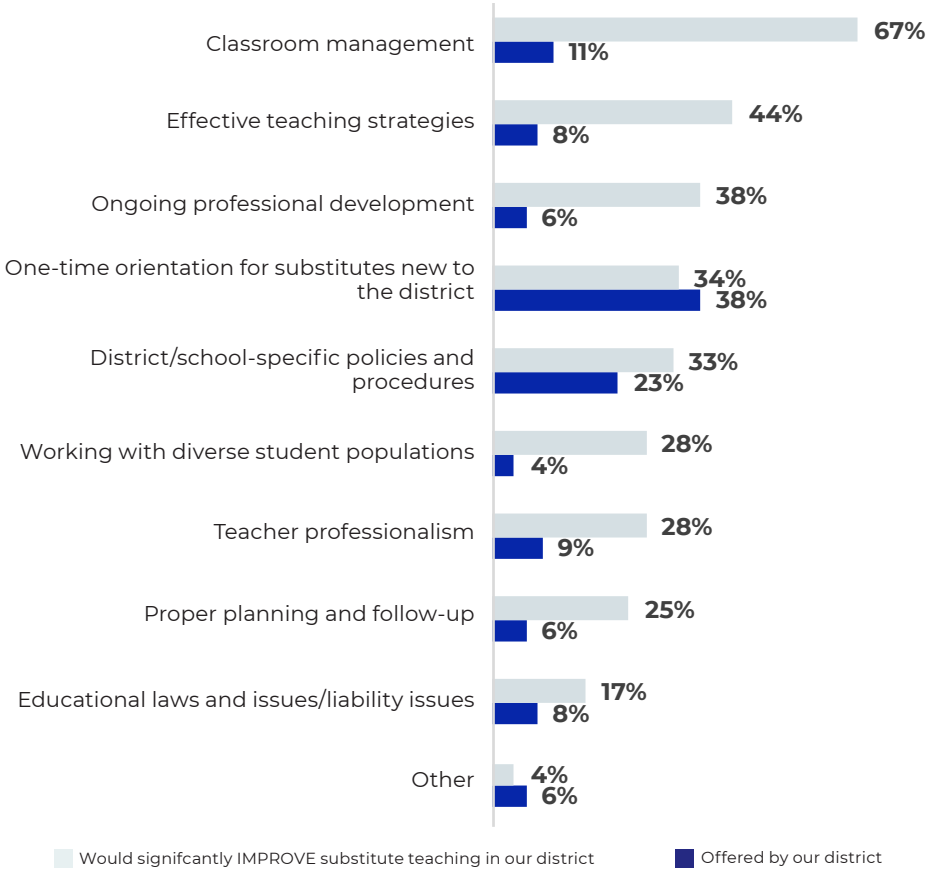
"I think it comes down to capacity because our instructional coaches already have numerous permanent employees...that need their support, and they can only do so much," a principal in Washington said.

However, a district-level human resources director in New Jersey suggests that there are lower-lift approaches that administrators can take.

"I just wish that the building principals would talk to them when they see an issue," she said.

"[Substitute teachers are] very valuable members of our community so we can't just throw them away when it doesn't work out once ... Just like we would retrain a teacher or addressing a need and help for growth with a teacher with things that are not egregious. We have to try to train them and have those conversations, not just automatically say, 'I don't want the substitute to come back to my building ever again.'"

Professional development: What's offered versus what administrators and school board members say should be offered



NOTE: 44 percent of respondents say their districts offer no professional development to substitute teachers. "I don't know" responses were removed from the analysis. Totals do not add up to 100 percent because respondents were asked to select all that apply.

If Covid-19 continues to disrupt school schedules, the need for training may become even more urgent as instruction may well move online once again.

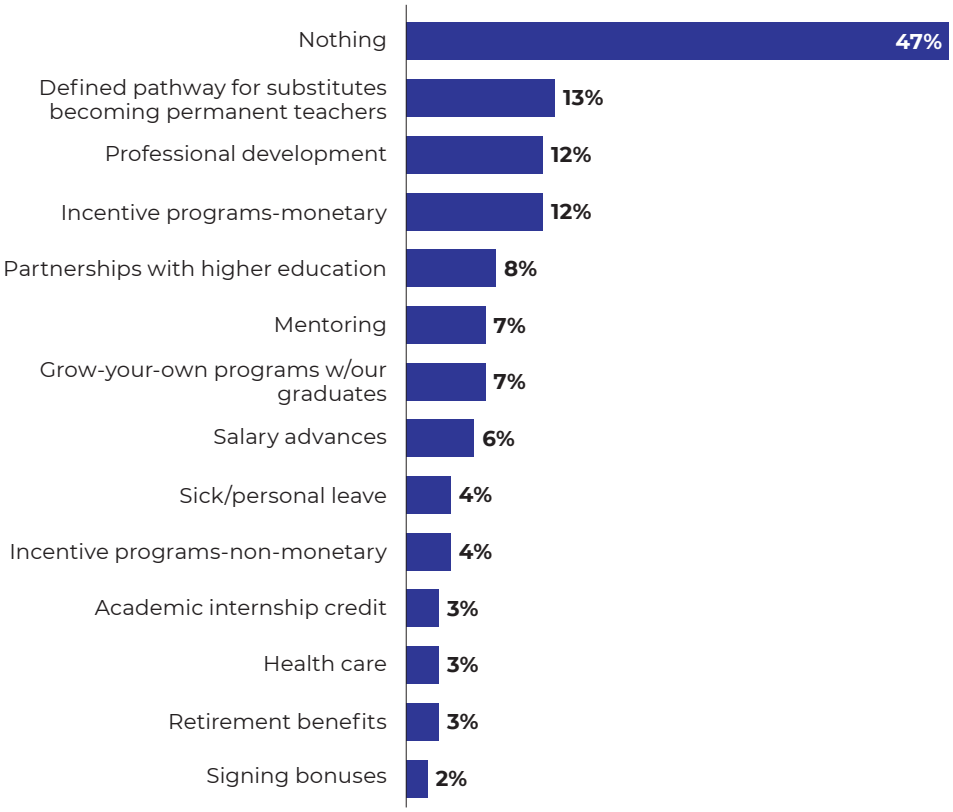
If Covid-19 continues to disrupt school schedules, the need for training may become even more urgent as instruction may well move online once again. If and when this happens, substitutes will almost certainly need assistance adapting to new technologies.

The Solution: Improving Recruitment & Retention

Improving recruitment efforts is number four on survey respondents' list of ways to improve substitute teaching in their districts.

Yet close to half of survey respondents (47 percent) say their district does not make any effort to recruit or retain substitute teachers.

Which of the following approaches does your district or school use to recruit and retain substitutes?



Improving recruitment efforts is number four on survey respondents' list of ways to improve substitute teaching in their districts.

"I used to teach in the district for many years, so when former students come back, I say, 'Hey, heard you graduated college, do you think you might want to substitute or teach?'" said a school board member from California. "That's pretty informal. We probably could do a better job by doing something a bit more formal than recruiting that way."

Even relatively low-cost approaches are rare. For example, just three percent offer academic internship credits to students who substitute teach. Just six percent provide salary advances. And only eight percent participate in partnerships with institutions of postsecondary education.

One particularly promising approach: Grow-your-own programs in which school districts encourage their own students to consider teaching careers by providing opportunities such as college-credit teacher preparation courses in high school. The approach can also be used to recruit and prepare parents, para-professionals, and, yes, substitute teachers for full-time, credentialed teaching positions. Districts can also grow their own substitutes. Although there's limited research available on the outcomes of this relatively new approach, such programs often aim to increase retention by targeting people like parents and students who are already committed to the community. In some

cases, they have also proven to increase diversity because youth and parent populations are often more diverse than the current teaching pool, which is majority female and white.

Despite the promise and benefits of this approach, just seven percent of survey respondents say their districts have used it.

Conclusion

When it comes to substitute teacher recruitment and retention, a sea change is underway and school districts are feeling the pain. Demand is up due to the changing demographics of the teacher population, which is increasingly comprised of Millennials who need to miss school for maternity leave and other responsibilities related to raising children, declining teacher morale, increases in absences due to professional development, and the desire for a better work-life balance In addition, the pandemic may create additional needs for substitutes if it recurs, as expected, in waves, leading teachers with health challenges to stay home even if schools remain open, and increasing the demand for substitutes who can take over the remote learning responsibilities of teachers who fall ill with the virus. Schools may also need to reduce class size to maintain social distancing, creating a demand for more teachers.

In the meantime, supply is down due to a growing tendency to ask substitute teachers to step into positions that have also become more difficult to fill as few students enter teacher preparation programs. These challenges are not going away anytime soon. In fact, a majority of administrators and school board members surveyed expect the demand for substitute teachers to be higher five years from now than it is today.

Education leaders are struggling to overcome these challenges. Certainly, a popular option is higher substitute teacher pay. But survey respondents told us they'd need to offer at least 26 percent more to even begin to make a difference. Given the realities of school district budgets, this may not be possible. Other options include:

- Providing professional development that not only improves substitute teachers' instructional ability but develops classroom management skills that help them avoid burnout and stress resulting from difficulties with student behavior. In the immediate future, substitute teachers may also benefit from being prepared to assume instructors remote learning responsibilities.
- Implementing basic recruitment and retention tactics from formally advertising the need for substitute teachers to offering incentives that encourage retention.
- Investing in grow-your-own programs that prepare districts' students, parents, para-professionals, and substitute teachers for teaching positions. This approach has the added potential of increasing the level of diversity in the teaching corps as grow-your-owns may reach people who had not previously considered entering the teaching profession.

It will take a robust and concerted effort for school and district leaders to maintain strong instruction in the face of the substitute teacher gap. But the right investments in the right spots will make it easier to face limitations in quantity without sacrificing quality.

When it comes to substitute teacher recruitment and retention, a sea change is underway and school districts are feeling the pain.

The Education Week Research Center produces independent, objective, non-partisan research and analysis. For more information, contact us at RCinfo@epe.org

To learn more about Kelly Education, visit www.kellyeducationalstaffing.us

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Differentials

Lee Ann Abe <lee_ann.abe@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 10:10 AM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern:
I am writing as a Special Educational Teacher writing about the need for the differential pay. I teach special education to the very severe population and have for several years. The differential pay has helped me greatly. Without it, I am positive that I would not be able to continue in the very special teaching line.
Thank you for your time and consideration
Lee-Ann Abe

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Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony (7/23/2020)

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:01 PM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>
Cc: "BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

19 July 2020

Members of Hawaii State Board of Education

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Keith Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 24 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending Hawaii public school.

My name is Patricia Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 29 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending Hawaii public school.

We are both in what is considered an "at-risk category". Regardless of safety measures in place, there is still no guarantee of complete protection. We care for two elderly parents in our home, and one parent who lives elsewhere. We do NOT want to transmit anything to them since they are in a "high-risk category".

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html

Data is very important as we all know. There was a large study in South Korea and this study showed that middle and high school students can transmit the virus just as much as adults do. Even though it's in South Korea, the virus is not bound by nationality or ethnicity.

Here is an article (and a link to the study with data) published by the New York Times with a weblink to the actual study:

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/10/20-1315_article

Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds
The study of nearly 65,000 people in South Korea suggests that school reopenings will trigger more outbreaks.
By Apoorva Mandavilli
New York Times
July 18, 2020
Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds (account required to read)

In the heated debate over reopening schools, one burning question has been whether and how efficiently children can spread the virus to others.

A large new study from South Korea offers an answer: Children younger than 10 transmit to others much less often than adults do, but the risk is not zero. And those between the ages of 10 and 19 can spread the virus at least as well as adults do.

The findings suggest that as schools reopen, communities will see clusters of infection take root that include children of all ages, several experts cautioned.

“I fear that there has been this sense that kids just won’t get infected or don’t get infected in the same way as adults and that, therefore, they’re almost like a bubbled population,” said Michael Osterholm, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Minnesota.

“There will be transmission,” Dr. Osterholm said. “What we have to do is accept that now and include that in our plans.”

Several studies from Europe and Asia have suggested that young children are less likely to get infected and to spread the virus. But most of those studies were small and flawed, said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute.

The new study “is very carefully done, it’s systematic and looks at a very large population,” Dr. Jha said. “It’s one of the best studies we’ve had to date on this issue.”

Other experts also praised the scale and rigor of the analysis. South Korean researchers identified 5,706 people who were the first to report Covid-19 symptoms in their households between Jan. 20 and March 27, when schools were closed, and then traced the 59,073 contacts of these “index cases.” They tested all of the household contacts of each patient, regardless of symptoms, but only tested symptomatic contacts outside the household.

The first person in a household to develop symptoms is not necessarily the first to have been infected, and the researchers acknowledged this limitation. Children are also less likely than adults to show symptoms, so the study may have underestimated the number of children who set off the chain of transmission within their households.

Still, experts said the approach was reasonable. “It is also from a place with great contact tracing, done at the point interventions were being put in place,” said Bill Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Children under 10 were roughly half as likely as adults to spread the virus to others, consistent with other studies. That may be because children generally exhale less air — and therefore less virus-laden air — or because they exhale that air closer to the ground, making it less likely that adults would breathe it in.

Even so, the number of new infections seeded by children may rise when schools reopen, the study authors cautioned. “Young children may show higher attack rates when the school closure ends, contributing to community transmission of Covid-19,” they wrote. Other studies have also suggested that the large number of contacts for schoolchildren, who interact with dozens of others for a good part of the day, may cancel out their smaller risk of infecting others.

The researchers traced the contacts only of children who felt ill, so it’s still unclear how efficiently asymptomatic children spread the virus, said Caitlin Rivers, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins

Bloomberg School of Public Health.

“I think it was always going to be the case that symptomatic children are infectious,” she said. “The questions about the role of children are more around whether children who don’t have symptoms are infectious.”

Dr. Rivers was a member of a scientific panel that on Wednesday recommended reopening schools wherever possible for disabled children and for those in elementary schools, because those groups have the most trouble learning online. She said the new study does not alter that recommendation.

The study is more worrisome for children in middle and high school. This group was even more likely to infect others than adults were, the study found. But some experts said that finding may be a fluke or may stem from the children’s behaviors.

These older children are frequently as big as adults, and yet may have some of the same unhygienic habits as young children do. They may also have been more likely than the younger children to socialize with their peers within the high-rise complexes in South Korea.

“We can speculate all day about this, but we just don’t know,” Dr. Osterholm said. “The bottom line message is: There’s going to be transmission.”

He and other experts said schools will need to prepare for infections to pop up. Apart from implementing physical distancing, hand hygiene and masks, schools should also decide when and how to test students and staff — including, for example, bus drivers — when and how long to require people to quarantine, and when to decide to close and reopen schools.

But they face a monumental challenge because the evidence on transmission within schools has been far from conclusive so far, experts said. Some countries like Denmark and Finland have successfully reopened schools, but others, like China, Israel and South Korea, have had to close them down again.

“People, depending on their ideology on school opening, are choosing which evidence to present — and that needs to be avoided,” said Jeffrey Shaman, an epidemiologist at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health in New York.

Although the new study does not offer definitive answers, he said, it does indicate that schools can increase virus levels within a community.

“So long as children are not just a complete dead end — incapable of passing the virus on, which does not seem to be the case — putting them together in schools, having them mix with teachers and other students will provide additional opportunities for the virus to move from person to person,” he said.

At the same time, Dr. Shaman said, it’s important for children not to miss out on critical years in education and socialization, and school districts have the unenviable task of choosing between those options: “It’s hard trying to find the right balance.”

Next, here is an article from a teacher who sums up exactly how we and many other teachers feel. There are weblinks within the article.

Teacher's Take on Reopening Schools Goes Viral: "I Don't See ANY Consideration for the Adults"
"You're asking us to accept going back into classrooms in the middle of a pandemic."
By Audrey Goodson Kingo
Workingmother.com

July 6, 2020

As the beginning of the school year rapidly approaches in much of the country, many districts still haven't decided if students will attend in-person or not.

Working parents are worried about how they'll continue to juggle their job with online learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics, which released a statement that "strongly advocates" for in-person instruction, cited concerns about kids.

But a teacher for Charlottesville City Schools in Virginia says one very important group has been neglected during these very important discussions: teachers and other support staff who keep schools running.

"I don't see ANY consideration for the adults in school buildings in all the articles calling for schools to open," says Christine Esposito, who teaches 6th grade honors language arts, in a Facebook post that has now been shared over 6,000 times.

"I've seen the research. Kids are, as much as we can determine barely six months into a pandemic, less likely to get it. They're less likely to suffer from a severe form of the disease, possibly less likely to transmit it. The calls for opening schools with this data make total sense," she acknowledges, before pointing out the (literal) fatal flaw in this logic: Grown-ups help schools run, too, and they are *very* susceptible to COVID-19. She's not only worried about her own safety—she's worried about her parents, her fellow teachers, the custodial staff, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and instructional assistants who are far more likely to be BIPOC, and thus more likely to suffer severe complications.

"When you're out there demanding that schools open and all of your arguments are about you, about what you need, about what your kids need, but NEVER ONCE mention the dangers to the staff and faculty who will necessarily need to be in those schools, you can see where I'm a little concerned," she says.

The AAP's recommendations for reopening do provide some guidance on minimizing the spread of COVID-19 between adults in school settings. "Given what is known about transmission dynamics, adults and adult staff within schools should attempt to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other persons as much as possible, particularly around other adult staff," the statement reads.

The statement also suggests all meetings and curriculum planning take place virtually, and that schools should stagger pickups and dropoffs, if possible. "Physical barriers, such as plexiglass, should be considered in reception areas and employee workspaces where the environment does not accommodate physical distancing, and congregating in shared spaces, such as staff lounge areas, should be discouraged."

In her post, Christine makes a very salient point about those guidelines and others: Many public schools are already underfunded. How will districts pay for the protective gear and strategies that are needed to keep everyone safe?

"Since, for the entire two decades I've been teaching, we've been asking parents to donate basic school supplies because we can't or won't adequately fund education, you might see where we're a little hesitant to go back into those classrooms without masks, without face shields, because masks don't work with the littlest kids (though face shields really aren't nearly as effective as masks, but…), without any promise of reliable, regular testing with a quick turnaround of results, without any plan for what happens when someone gets sick, without any plan for what staff and faculty do when someone in their family is sick, without any

plan on how we help parents who need the childcare, so they're forced to give kids Tylenol in order to get through the temperature screening so they don't lose their job, without any promise of additional money to hire more teachers, to lease more space, to scale up what distance learning will or could look like," she says.

That being said, Christine knows that there's good reason to be worried about kids too. "I know they need to be back at school. I saw how distance learning went this spring. It wasn't pretty," she acknowledges. "We're going to be facing kids who are dealing with layer upon layer of trauma, we need to make time and space for that, so stop telling me kids are behind. They're not any further behind than anyone else. They're behind some arbitrary lines we drew in the sand so long ago we're not sure we remember why we drew them. We need to meet our kids where they are. ***I don't want to hear one word about testing, unless it involves a nasal or throat swab.*** Not. One. Word."

Christine's final thoughts sum up the grim situation perfectly: Kids and teachers are being asked to make sacrifices while other adults refuse to do so.

"The worst part about this is the completely cavalier attitude I see from far too many about doing what needs to be done if you have even half a prayer of opening schools this fall. Wear a mask. Stay home," she says. "If you can't do any of those things, but want me to go back to school in August with a smile on my face, you're asking me to make far bigger sacrifices than the ones you've been willing to make so far."

Please also note the paragraph about testing. That only adds to the trauma. At my (Keith's) school, we are giving students a 4.5 hour test on each of two half-days on the second week of school. And those days are only the third and fourth day since school begins. That is not how students should start their days back. And the reasoning behind it is because the HIDOE mandates that we give students assessments to find the gaps (the Return to Learn Principal's Handbook on the HIDOE website http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%202.pdf (Page 16, it says within the first two weeks of school). We all know where the gaps are. How about we teach the students, give assessment tasks within the lessons, and THEN report the gaps after a month or so? Why are we anxious to report data so soon?

We appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of COVID-19 in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. We, as teachers, are disheartened to hear us as being "a test case" for the rest of the nation. Yes, children may not get sick or critically ill, but they can be asymptomatic carriers that infect adults (especially at-risk adults like us) on campus. And then those educators' families will be put at risk too, especially if they care for kupuna (like we do). We do not want to be in the situation where we get the virus ***at all***. Regardless of how many medical facilities we have. **COVID-19 is not curable! Who knows what will happen to any one person who contracts it? We do not want to take that chance since we (and our kupuna that we take care of) are at-risk.** Even Dr. Bruce Anderson said at the most recent Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 hearing that we will probably have transmission in schools! It is a cavalier attitude by anyone who believes that statement AND still

wants schools to open that disregards any adult educator's health who is at-risk and high-risk (30-40% of educators).

We have to care for **ALL** people, not just a select few. Government is "for *the people*."

The only recourse teachers have is to take sick leave. "For how long?" our doctor asks. To which we can only say, "We don't know." A Quarter or a Semester? By which time we would probably use up our sick leaves. And can you see how a doctor would not feel comfortable approving sick leave when we are not actually sick? Our doctor told us that this is a first for him. Or apply for "disability" (following ADA guidelines) which we would not qualify (per our doctor) since we are only "at-risk" but not in the "high-risk" category. What other options would we have except to quit or retire early?

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns we have expressed.

Best regards,
Keith and Patricia Ishihara
Pearl City

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

100% Distance Learning for older children

Lilia Doubleday <liliadoubleday@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:52 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov, lynn.fallin@boe.hawaii.gov, kaimana.barcarse@boe.hawaii.gov, kili.namauu@boe.hawaii.gov, margaret.cox@boe.hawaii.gov, shanty.asher@boe.hawaii.gov, dwight.takeno@boe.hawaii.gov, kenneth.uemura@boe.hawaii.gov, bruce.voss@boe.hawaii.gov, aesheelman@hsta.org, crosenlee@hsta.org, senbaker@capitol.hawaii.gov, david.y.ige@hawaii.gov, "repyamashita@capitol.hawaii.gov" <repyamashita@capitol.hawaii.gov>
Cc: Lilia Doubleday <liliadoubleday@gmail.com>

Aloha,

My name is Lilia Doubleday,
I am a parent of a middle school age child. He is my youngest child. He is 11 years old. He loves school.
My oldest child is 31 years old. She is a middle school teacher. She loves being a teacher. She also loves her 5 month old baby boy, my youngest grandson. She lives with her family and her elderly IN -Laws. We all live in a multi generation households. When schools open back up to, in class face to face learning, we will all be exposed to high risk. **Unnecessary high risk.**

My first question to you is - would you send your children to school tomorrow ?
During a pandemic? When Hawaii is experiencing a surge?
Would you expect your daughter to teach under these conditions, unprepared with limited resources and with so many unknowns, and exposing herself to high risk? How productive would this learning environment be?
Not to mention the very real possibility, as the DOH Bruce Anderson said ,"There WILL BE community spread from schools opening in person."
And then the likely possibility of deaths. Life long illness .

PLEASE open schools in **August with DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY** , for the **safety of our ENTIRE COMMUNITY.**
There are no real safety bubbles outside of the home.

Yesterday, a large study from South Korea was just published in the New York Times, finding that **children 10 to 19 spread the Coronavirus disease just as much as adults**. ***They bring it back home.***

Our school community is NOT prepared to open safely in two weeks. ITS NOT SAFE. FOR ANYONE .

PLEASE recommend the PHASE BACK ON CAMPUS plan, when community virus spread is NOT on the rise and schools have prepared plans, in place safety measures and most importantly proper training for our educators. In addition, resources that can support PPE and CDC guidelines.

Listen to your community. Hear our educators . Value our lives and well being. Our future is at stake.

Know there is safer way to educate during a PANDEMIC.

Prioritize health and well being.

Mahalo for reading this.

May you stay healthy and well.

An extremely concerned parent,

Lilia Doubleday

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony : Action Item G

Doreen Stone <dolini@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 7:12 PM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Board of Education members,

This concerns Action -Item G:
My name is Doreen Stone. i am, a teacher at King Kaumualii Elementary. I am writing to ask to continue funding the teacher shortage differentials as promised to the teachers. i personally am not receiving the differential, but I am distressed to hear many teachers made choices based on those promises.

Please consider how that promise may influence the serious teacher shortage we are experiencing.

Thank you,

Doreen Stone
King Kaumualii Elementary School

****
This email was scanned by the Cisco IronPort Email Security System contracted by the Hawaii Dept of Education. If you receive suspicious/phish email, forward a copy to **phishing-report@k12.hi.us**. This helps us monitor suspicious/phish email getting thru. You will not receive a response, but rest assured the information received will help to build additional protection.
****

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher concerns about the return to school

Nicole Ames <nicoleames12@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:39 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Senator,

My name is Nicole Ames and I am a 7th grade English teacher at Kalakaua Middle School in Kalihi. I am deeply concerned about the plan that the BOE has put forth in regards to the reopening of schools in August, especially Superintendent Kishimoto's statement yesterday insisting that things will be "safe" due to the creation of "ohana bubbles" and the providing of PPE. After watching the meeting between Superintendent Kishimoto and senators, I feel the BOE is propagating misinformation and half-truths to the public in order to make it seem as though the plan to return to school is safer than it actually is. Below are corrections to the half-truths given by the superintendent and represent the concerns of many teachers:

1) Superintendent Kishimoto and Dr Park claim that the idea of Ohana bubbles will limit student exposure to only the students in their class and allow for easier contact tracing.
As a middle school teacher, I personally can testify that the idea of a "bubble" does not exist in middle school according to our current school plan. According to our school's plan (which is similar to many of the middle schools on island) students will report to school in a rotation of 4 groups once a week in-person (to allow for 6ft distancing in classrooms), and the rest of the days will be distance learning. On the day that each group is on campus, students will stay in their assigned classroom and teachers will rotate between the classrooms each period to teach their specific subject (7 classrooms to be exact). Teachers are exposed to all ~150 of their students, plus by proxy, whoever those students have been in contact with in their households (sometimes 15-person households). In addition, they are also exposed to the other 6 teachers that rotate within those classrooms and any other students THOSE teachers have contact with. This idea of a bubble stresses the importance of keeping your bubble small and to people you trust. Kalihi has one of the highest instances of COVID and many large households. Our classrooms are thus not a bubble. They're a hoard. This not only puts students and teachers at risk, but the community at large as the students bring whatever germs they are exposed to in school home to their (often times extended) households.

2) Dr Kishimoto kept insisting in the meeting yesterday that teachers had been receiving training in a distance learning platform since March and that parents have the option to tell their schools that they require 100% distance learning.
The distance learning platform that she is referring to is a self-guided e-learning platform that is not taught by a teacher. Many parents are unaware that they can ask for this and many schools are not prepared to offer a 100% distance learning program, either from lack of training or from confusion as to what options they are supposed to be offering.
As for the training she is talking about, most teachers have no idea what she is talking about. Personally, my school provided some professional development about different resources we could use to teach remotely, (like google classroom, google meets, and bookwidgets) but I would not call these trainings and they were certainly not organized by the DOE, but by individual teachers at my school out of necessity. Other teachers I have talked to said their schools gave them a handout of resources they could use and that was it.

3) **Kishimoto claims that teacher numbers have stabilized and that there is not a mass exodus of teachers. This is incorrect, I personally know many teachers that are planning to take leave. They are just waiting on the final word of the plan (many of the plans at individual schools that Kishimoto spoke of have not been officially approved by the BOE) and the webinar from HSTA on Monday that will inform teachers of their leave options.**
As a teacher, I will be the first to say that education is important and essential for our children in the islands. However, the rushed plan to bring students back to school in the middle of a pandemic lacks common sense and forethought. If students and teachers are not made to feel safe in this dire time, there will be severe consequences for the education system of Hawaii. We are already in a teacher shortage, and things look to be about to get worse.
Personally, I know many teachers who are at risk or close to retirement who, despite their passion for teaching, are considering leaving the profession due to the lack of health safety they feel they will have in the coming months. As a pregnant woman myself (the CDC very recently added pregnant women to the high risk category, saying that they are at increased risk for manifestations of severe illness due to COVID-19, such as intensive care unit admission and mechanical ventilation- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology) I am considering not returning this year due to fears for my health and the risk of contracting/transmitting COVID-19 to my elderly family members that I live with. In addition, I have learned that if I test positive upon admittance to the hospital when I am in labor, I will be separated from my baby upon birth. I cannot risk the health of myself, my family, or that of my newborn.

Other teachers with working spouses that can afford to be a stay-at-home parent might make the choice to do so. In any of these cases, we are facing a potentially severe loss of teachers due to the lack of consideration the BOE is displaying toward the health and safety of its students and staff. This will devastate the teaching workforce for years to come and greatly impact the quality of education that our students receive.
Already, our school has difficulty finding substitutes in a normal school year. However, with the lack of a concrete and safe plan from the BOE, finding one for my maternity leave has become impossible. Who will teach our children when even more teachers leave due to fear for their health?

The BOE and Superintendent Kishimoto refuse to consider opening schools with 100% distance learning, however, with community spread numbers higher than what they were when we closed in March this is the only safe option. Dr Park herself said the only way to ensure safety is to stay home. **Teachers are willing to teach online, but if this were to be the case, we need more time to prepare.** The state had since March to prepare for the start of the new school year and to think about possible options. Yet, here we are two weeks before school is due to start and numbers are going up, school schedules haven't been approved, concrete decisions haven't been made, and all stakeholders(teachers, parents, students) have very little idea of what is going on. Teachers, administors and parents are not being asked what they want. Newspapers and the news channels make it seem like the plan to open is solid, but that is far from the truth. The BOE needs to start being honest. Their communication has been terrible and it is not improving as Dr Kishimoto claims. Principals and teachers are afraid to voice their concerns or give their names for fear of retribution.

In order for students and teachers to safely return to school we need 100% distance learning, we need time, and we need leadership that understands the fears and concerns of the community. Without this, the return to school will be a disaster, more harmful to our students and community than helpful.

Sincerely,
Nicole Ames

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony of reopening of the school year

SherriAnn Wakui <stweety68@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:35 PM
To: Boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education Senators ,

I am a DOE employee who works at a multitrack school as a Educational Assistant. My concern is I am afraid to go into work on a daily basis to work with 20 cohort and 20 students from different color track . Educational Assistant are the first to report to work from 7:30am to 2:35 pm . Also we will be supervising students in the classroom , recess , lunch time as part of our job description and duties as a Educational Assistant. Plus we do tutoring in the afternoon daily face to face . This puts our life at risk to being expose with students beside during instructional time .

Another thing is being an employee for a school , I am a single parent who has child in high school and I believe distance learning is better option then to send them to school. I would not put my child at risk of having to attend class with their classmates and who knows if that person as COVID19.

Next, my reason of concern is I have kupuna parents that I care for at home. I would put them at risk as well, my father had open heart surgery last year and my mother as a health condition . For me and my son to come home from school and work , knowing we may be exposed to someone who may have COVID19, Who will pay for my bill's, rent , groceries , medical and take care of my parents ? If I myself or my son had COVID19, where will we go ? Will my employer pay for my medical leave ? I live off of my paycheck to survive and any possibilities of going to work to having contact with students and teachers will not be good for me. My job and duties is to report to work from 7:30 am to 4pm . And to wear a mask for 8 hours is difficult to breath in without no breaks of fresh air with asthma.

Lastly, to reopening of the school is a risk of students who will not sit in a classroom for 6 hours facing forward , keeping their mask on , and social distance. The numbers will spike and not flatten the curve and flu season is coming up . Please reconsider and hear the voices of staff members and not only the teachers because we as Educational Assistants are the ones who will be in more contact with the students .

Thank you ,
SherriAnn

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening of Schools

shelly cassler <shelly.cassler@gmail.com>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:49 AM

20 July 2020

To The Hawaii State Board of Education:

My name is Shelly Furutani Cassler and I am a first grade teacher at King Kaumuali`i Elementary. My husband is also a teacher at Kauai High School. We have a daughter who is supposed to be entering first grade at King Kaumauli`i. We are still not comfortable enough with the plan in place to say we are going to be sending her to in person school.

I am writing because I am deeply concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on August 4th. The current state plan not only does not ensure the safe return of our students to school, but indeed it actively jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. The measures announced by Hawaii DOE do not meet CDC recommendations, and do not adequately consider the risks to our community or the consequences that are likely to result if the state proceeds with the current plan. It is unacceptable.

There is mounting scientific evidence that COVID-19 is mainly transmitted when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even simply just breathes or talks. The conditions that facilitate viral transmission are closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces in which individuals are not wearing masks. (Thus it is not merely a matter of maintaining adequate physical distance.) Many of our classrooms exhibit precisely these qualities that we know, scientifically, to be unsafe. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the current DOE plan does not sufficiently address the fact that reopening our schools under the current plan will create exactly the conditions that are most conducive to transmitting the virus. It is a recipe for a public health disaster.

While it is encouraging the state and HSTA reached an agreement to maintain six-foot distance between students in the classroom, this is far from adequate to even minimally protect the health and safety of our community. Among the most serious inadequacies in the current reopening plan are:

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for "universal masking". Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.

2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe. Since my husband and I are both teachers we are putting the safety of our family into the hands of the families at our school as we are being exposed daily to over 100 students, I do not feel this is an "Ohana Bubble."
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

4. It is likely that some teachers, foolishly, do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe untrue things, but as responsible public employees they do not have any right whatsoever to inflict that false belief upon others in their care. As an analogy, some teachers may not believe in vaccines, but we do not allow their opinion to change our vaccination requirements. Policy should be based on science, and on life-or-death matters of public health, certain things – like vaccinations, masks, and social distancing – mandatory, with no exceptions.

5. Taken together, the current state plan is a recipe for a public health disaster, and puts the lives of students, parents, and teachers at great risk. It is completely unacceptable. Under the current state plan there is no possibility that my family will be sending our daughter to in-person classes or that I feel comfortable teaching under the proposed classroom rules and conditions.

Therefore, I am calling on you to announce and implement the following measures:

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools;

2. Delay the reopening of all public schools in order to allow schools more time to prepare online learning systems and time to train teachers on how to teach during these new circumstances. We have not had any training on how to adjust our instruction and I still have so many questions. The few days before students arrive will not be enough to make me feel comfortable and ready to keep myself and my students safe.

3. A statewide mandate to require the use of masks at all times when on public school premises. (With reasonable exceptions only in the case of teachers and administrators who are alone in their classrooms and offices.)

4. Allowing no exceptions to the six-foot distancing rule. There are many schools putting in waivers for the six-foot rule in cafeterias. While I do realize that there is a need for space, reducing this to 3 feet while students have their masks off is asking for a disaster. Students would be in reaching distance of each other and if you've ever been in an elementary cafeteria, students do not just sit, face forward, and eat. There is a lot of playing and socializing that goes on.

I understand that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of Covid in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. Failure to improve the current reopening plan by adding the above additional measures would constitute a severe dereliction of your duty as a public servant to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns I have expressed.

Best regards,

Shelly Cassler
3198 Alohi St.
Lihue, HI 96766

Opening of Schools Concerns

Corece Harada-Oyer <BellaKi2@outlook.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 4:26 PM
To: "boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing to you as a parent and a staff member at an elementary school in Hilo. I watched the session yesterday with Superintendent Kishimoto and was appalled at the information that she was “presenting”.

I know first hand that our teachers have not been adequately trained and to expect them to be trained the first 9 days of the school year when students will already be in school is just ridiculous!

As a Parent, I am struggling with the idea of school starting in a few weeks because at the current moment, our numbers are continuing to go up. On the other hand, I’m an employee of the DOE and I NEED to return to work so keeping my children home for distance learning is not even an option.

What I don’t understand is how schools were shut down in March when our daily numbers were much lower than they are now, but here we are in July with COVID cases continuing to climb and we’re going to send our kids back to school in a few weeks. They’re going back with a high possibility of getting infected and then in turn coming home and infecting family members who fall into the high risk categories whether it be because of their age or underlying illnesses.

Working at the school, I know there are parents who send their children to school sick. When their children get sent to the health room, they end up waiting there for hours as their parents have some kind of excuse for not being able to pick them up right away. How is that fair for ANYONE on campus!?!? I know they keep saying parents need to be educated, but educating some parents means nothing as they will continue to knowingly not follow the rules and put other students, faculty and staff in danger.

As the start of the school year approaches, my anxiety levels continue to rise as I’m just not confident that our teachers are fully trained and ready to be able to successfully teach our students with this new blended model. As a parent, I’m so worried for my children, but most of all for my Mom who is in the high risk category. She will be the one having to watch my children on their distance learning days while I’m at work. If something was to happen to her, the guilt myself and my children will carry will be immeasurable.

I humbly ask that you consider everyones concerns during this time because they are real. It’s not that I don’t want school to open because I know my children need to go back eventually. I’m just asking that we start school up once the DOE really has their s*@t together because my children, my parents as well as my health are not something I’m comfortable risking with all of this uncertainty!

Thank you for your time,
Corece Harada-Oyer
Parent
DOE employee

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

School reopening

Erin Thompson <thompsone@khswaverider.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:10 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am a public school teacher from the Big Island, and also help take care of several elderly and immune-compromised family members.
I implore you to consider a school reopening plan that primarily features distance learning to begin this school year.
This would allow education to continue as we prevent Covid-19 spread and SAVE LIVES.
There is nothing safer than distance learning for our keiki and our communities until we understand this disease better and have developed more medical tools to bring it under control.
I am a high school science teacher and I highly value hands-on, face to face instruction, BUT not at the expense of the health and lives of my students, my family, my community, and myself.
I am willing to do whatever it takes to connect with my students and facilitate online learning until it is safe to venture back into the classroom. I do not think I should be asked to put my life, and the lives of others, on the line by being mandated to return to campus while this virus is running wild.
The solutions for the elementary, middle, and high school levels may not all be the same, but I am absolutely sure that the high school teachers and students are the most ready and able to engage in distance learning.
Distance learning may not be ideal, but it is far preferable to contributing to the inevitable spread of Covid-19 and unnecessary suffering/death that will result if we proceed with on-campus school.
Please fight for the health and well-being of all Hawaii by reopening schools with distance learning.
Sincerely,
Erin Thompson

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Holly <hollybakescookies@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:32 PM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Name: Holly Uehara, Teacher
Meeting: July 23, 2020
Agenda Item: D. Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress

All it takes is one. One case to come into a classroom. One cough that a student doesn't cover. One hug that a student gives to their friend before class. One parent to expose their child. One child to expose their class. One teacher to expose their class. One.

The dangerous part of this virus is the asymptomatic. You can temperature check all the students in your school, but the asymptomatic will fall through the cracks. A student could be walking around and feel fine, but they could be infecting everyone they come into contact with.

According to the WHO, you can be infected by someone with COVID if you "have been in settings of less than 1 metre from those who have the disease. In these cases, it is best to stay at home".

I have been teaching for seven years and I can tell you that almost daily, a student will sneeze or cough without covering their mouth. Sickness can spread through a classroom like wildfire. As a teacher of younger students, there is no possible way that I can stay 1 metre away from my students throughout the school day.

According to the "Vital Signs Metric Overview" from the superintendent's office, the number one priority is student and staff safety.

When schools were closed on March 19 we had 8 new cases in the state. Yesterday, July 20, we had 23 new cases reported. If we decided to close in March due to safety concerns, why are we opening now when we have 4 times as many cases reported daily? How is that showing families and staff that their safety is top priority?

In a perfect world, I believe that Dr. Park's "bubble" will work in classrooms. If a family would not interact with any other families, then it would limit exposure. Unfortunately it is not a perfect world, families will interact with others and therefore bring more exposure into a class "bubble". Siblings in one household will bring the exposure of other classroom bubbles to their own classrooms. As a teacher, I could be exposing half of my class to the other half of my class which would mitigate the benefit of low class numbers.

I know that this disease doesn't affect children in the same way as adults. I know that the death rate is very low in children. But all it takes is one. Some may say, it's only one. But what if that one, was your child who becomes part of that low death rate? What if it was your mother who died, because your child brought home the virus? How will that child be emotionally when they realize later in life that they brought home the virus that their grandma passed away from?

It's only one, but all it takes is one.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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From: **Erin Thompson** <thompsone@khswaverider.k12.hi.us>
Date: Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:19 PM
Subject: distance learning/school reopening
To: <catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne,

I am a public school teacher from the Big Island, and also help take care of several elderly and immune-compromised family members.
I implore you to consider a school reopening plan that primarily features distance learning to begin this school year.
This would allow education to continue as we prevent Covid-19 spread and SAVE LIVES.
There is nothing safer than distance learning for our keiki and our communities until we understand this disease better and have developed more medical tools to bring it under control.
I am a high school science teacher and I highly value hands-on, face to face instruction, BUT not at the expense of the health and lives of my students, my family, my community, and myself.
I am willing to do whatever it takes to connect with my students and facilitate online learning until it is safe to venture back into the classroom. I do not think I should be asked to put my life, and the lives of others, on the line by being mandated to return to campus while this virus is running wild.
The solutions for the elementary, middle, and high school levels may not all be the same, but I am absolutely sure that the high school teachers and students are the most ready and able to engage in distance learning.
Distance learning may not be ideal, but it is far preferable to contributing to the inevitable spread of Covid-19 and unnecessary suffering/death that will result if we proceed with on-campus school.
Please fight for the health and well-being of all Hawaii by reopening schools with distance learning.
Sincerely,
Erin Thompson

Gmail

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

Differential

Jon Burnham <jon.burnham3@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

As a Special Education Teacher, it is necessary to keep the differential in place to maintain quality teachers in special education and hard to staff areas.

Specifically in the field of special education, how much money has been lost to lawsuits due to having unqualified special education teachers? How is cutting the differential for highly qualified special education teachers the best course of action when there is already a lawsuit for students with special education services to get compensation?

Cutting this, and the potential 20% payout that Governor Ige is proposing will drive away highly qualified special education teachers which this state is in desperate need of.

This is a mistake and it will lead to lawsuits as special education teachers leave the state (including possibly myself)

Mahalo,

Jon Burnham

Gmail

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

Shortage differentials are essential

Jeremiah Ellard <jeremiah_ellard@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:29 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha, my wife and I work in Lahaina and both receive hard to staff differential funds and my wife also receives a special education differential. These funds have been a good send to us and are completely necessary for us to continue living and working in the community of Lahaina. We love this community but it is a very expensive and isolated area on Maui. We also know that many positions including special education are very hard to staff with qualified teachers. Please continue this funding for the sake of our most vulnerable keiki and for educators to have the opportunity to make a difference in this community.

Get Outlook for Android

Gmail

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

Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation

Andrea Nance <andrea.nance@aol.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

I hope this testimony finds you well as we are all fighting through these excruciating times. Please read my testimony keeping in mind that you are to serve your community and do what's best for them.

To adjust cuts to teachers salary for the 2020-2021 school year (that teachers are reporting back to in less than two weeks) is despicable. Teachers have been spending even MORE time trying to engage with their students when we shut down after spring break and now working endlessly to come up with solutions to support all kids and give them an opportunity to be face to face. You don't deserve to take the minimal compensation these teachers HAVE WORKED FOR.

We are all struggling through trying times but when you defund teachers, it effects more than just the employees. It effects the students, their families, and thus the community. How many of our teachers (that we are short of) are ALREADY taking this year off? How many families are crying every night worried desperately how they're going to afford to work but also someone manage having their child home half of the week? Enough that you should listen and take care of the people that make a POSITIVE difference in our community each and every day.

All of you have the choice and power to make a positive difference.

Mahalo for your time.

All the best,
Andrea Nance

Gmail

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

Keep the differentials!

Kimi Kawachi <kimikawachi@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: "kimikawachi@yahoo.com" <kimikawachi@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:33 PM

I understand that these are trying times. We have been impacted like never before with the Covid pandemic. However, taking away the shortage differentials is not the answer. Special Education students have higher needs. They need more services and intensive instruction. We are always working very hard to create individualized instruction to ensure that they are able to have a successful future. It is impossible when we don't have trained and certified teachers. There has never been a year where every position in sped in my school was staffed with a qualified sped teacher. There is consistently long term subs in the special education classrooms. Special Education is prone to lawsuits and IDEA laws which make being a sped teacher especially tenuous and risky. We spend tons of time on IEPs and meetings. Every single year I need to spend extra time doing IEPs and meetings for students that are not on my caseload because a long term sub is not allowed to do them. Every year I need to mentor new special education teachers who then move back to the mainland because they can't handle the job, and they can't afford to live here. Teachers are constantly having to give up for the economy. It is always the teachers who get furloughed. We are actually staffed this year with special education teachers. I know that is due to the differential. Take it away and we will be back to the same problem. Next year teachers will transfer to other positions, jobs, or move away. Please stop punishing us! Please don't make us carry the economy on our backs! I am a single mother and can't afford another pay cut. I have served the Hawaii Department of Education faithfully for 23 years. I have won two court cases for the DOE which saved tons of money. I have helped too many kids to count. I have worked tons of overtime with no pay. I have run a Special Olympics team for 10 years which is a National Champion School, featured on ESPN. I spend thousands every year buying supplies and food for my students. The differential was the first time I felt appreciated for all I do because it was something given that I didn't have to beg for. Turns out I need to beg for it after all. Turns out we are not appreciated after all. Always at the whim of others who decide whether we should be paid a living wage. Please do not cut our differential. Let's ensure that our special needs students have teachers that they deserve!

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

K Teruya <kteruya@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Keith Teruya and I am a Special Education Teacher at Nimitz Elementary. I have been a special education teacher for 18 years.

One of the biggest factors that I remained in the special education position this year has been the pay differential for Special Education Teachers. I realized that the department sees the value in keeping its highly qualified special education teachers in the classroom. With that in mind, I did not contemplate pursuing other positions in the DOE, transferring departments or leaving the profession. If this extra compensation for special education teachers is discontinued, I may have to reevaluate my options especially during the upcoming teacher transfer period. There is a reason why there is a shortage of special education teachers. The pay differential is a way to help make up for the shortcomings. Please don't force me to have to make a hard decision. Please keep the pay differential.

Thank you.
Keith Teruya

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jon Burnham <jon.burnham3@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

As a Special Education Teacher, it is necessary to keep the differential in place to maintain quality teachers in special education and hard to staff areas.

Specifically in the field of special education, how much money has been lost to lawsuits due to having unqualified special education teachers? How is cutting the differential for highly qualified special education teachers the best course of action when there is already a lawsuit for students with special education services to get compensation?

Cutting this, and the potential 20% payout that Governor Ige is proposing will drive away highly qualified special education teachers which this state is in desperate need of.

This is a mistake and it will lead to lawsuits as special education teachers leave the state (including possibly myself)

Mahalo,

Jon Burnham

Gmail

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

Teacher Differential Pay

Renee Obrien <msreneeobrien@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a Special Education Teacher at Lihikai Elementary on Maui. I am writing to urge you to keep the differential pay for Special Education Teachers and hard to staff teachers in rural areas.

By keeping this pay we will enable us to hold onto our teachers and encourage others to take on these teaching positions.

As it stands now, my school last year was 2 Special Education Teachers short which put an immense strain on our department and the services that we provided to our students.

Please take a moment to consider keeping this pay as a way to keep our teachers, and hopefully recruit more to serve our most vulnerable population.

Mahalo,
Renee O'Brien
Special Education Teacher
K-2
Lihikai Elementary
Maui, HI

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sheri Preston <sheprestonii@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Sheri Preston. I am an 11-year veteran Special Education teacher at Kohala Middle School and have a son who will be a junior at Kohala High. As a Special Education teacher, I enjoy working with the vulnerable and at-risk students who have special needs. Being a Special Education teacher can be very rewarding and at the same time very challenging. In the three states I have taught, Special Education teachers have been in high demand because of the high turnover and burnout rate.

According to HIDOE, for the upcoming 2020-21 school year, teachers transferring into SpEd positions increased by 29% and those leaving SpEd positions decreased by 57%. The differentials have made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining shortage area teachers. Differentials are crucial to building a strong, certified teaching faculty for Hawaii's keiki. Taking away differentials at this precarious time will surely hurt the reopening of Hawaii's schools and ultimately Hawaii's public education system.

Sincerely,
Sheri Preston
Special Education Teacher
Kohala Middle School

Gmail

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

Postpone school

Brittany Nakawatase <britnaka@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:42 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teachers and students are not safe to return!!!!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Funding of differential

Aaron <aaronjpeck@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing in response to the DOE requesting to suspend the funding of differentials. Let me first say I am the registrar of Kealakehe High school for the past 8 years. Every single year we turn over more than half of our SPED department because of many reasons. Secondly we are in a hard to fill location which compounds the problem of filling our teaching positions. Normally on any given year we may have 10-20 emergency hires who are non certified teachers, 7-8 of them filling sped positions. Our sped department over the years has been an absolute mess and typically our department head has 1-2 years teaching experience. Is that really the knowledge and experience we want of someone running our special ed department? Since the sped differentials went into place, we have had talk of regular Ed teachers wanting to return to sped and more and more qualified teachers were moving back into sped. Now this? Think about it, a furlough is probably going to be likely soon. Now your going to quit funding these hard to fill stipends as well as give these teachers a furlough? I feel sorry for these disadvantaged students as they will suffer beyond words. Your going to have our most vulnerable students being taught by mostly non qualified teachers. I would guess this is going to cause the problem to be even worse than before when 50% of our sped teachers were emergency hires. At least if a furlough does go through, there would still be a bit of incentive for teachers to fill these hard to fill positions. Furlough and cut to differential? Forget about it, the department of education will never recover from this monumental mistake.

Sincerely,
Aaron

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Renee Obrien <msreneeobrien@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a Special Education Teacher at Lihikai Elementary on Maui. I am testifying item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

By keeping this pay we will enable us to hold onto our teachers and encourage others to take on these teaching positions.

As it stands now, my school last year was 2 Special Education Teachers short which put an immense strain on our department and the services that we provided to our students.

Please take a moment to consider keeping this pay as a way to keep our teachers, and hopefully recruit more to serve our most vulnerable population.

Mahalo,
Renee O'Brien
Special Education Teacher
K-2
Lihikai Elementary
Maui, HI

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

reject the proposal

llow <llow08@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Attention:
Teachers need the pay. We work double and have put up with tough conditions. Pay us what was settled. Reject the proposal and do NOT cut the pay teachers deserve.

L. Low
Kaimuki High School
Teacher

Gmail

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

Shortage Differentials

Tamarine Carvalho <tmapuhi@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Are you kidding me? You want to finally start respecting us and paying us a somewhat decent pay increase as a Special Education teacher and now you want to take it away?

I work in a severe and profound disability population and teaching this population during this time puts me at a higher risk because of my students being exempt from wearing masks! On top of this as a single parent of 3, I barely was making ends meet on my teacher salary and now you want to take this raise away? I am about to go back to work and I also need to figure out childcare during the opening of the school because my kids don't go to school everyday!

I am appalled and I will not be able to financially survive here in Hawaii! If you take this money away I will leave this profession! I work around the clock at school I have no downtime and rest because my students are such high needs cases! Not to mention the amount of paperwork I do for IEP's and with my population of students I have to provide extra documentation and contact many outside service Agencies to meet the needs and federal IEP obligations for my students! I am over this! In January, it was such a relief to have that pay raise!! I was able to leave my 3rd part time job! Now, I don't even have my 2nd part time job Due to COVID-19 and I don't qualify for any help!
You will have an even more shortage of special education teachers and will be filling those positions with unqualified people! I am so disappointed with the department of education!

So over this and fed up,

Ms. Tamarine Carvalho

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

(no subject)

Moe Williams <moesspott@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please dont cut the differentials. The cost of living is hard enough in Hawaii. I already have another job to help with money, but am barely getting by. I also know it is difficult to keep teachers here, with this cut more teachers may just quit. Please try to use "rainy day" funds or something.

Maureen "Moe" Williams
Special Education Teacher
Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School

Gmail

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

(no subject)

electragrace@gmail.com <electragrace@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi there!

I am a special education teacher at a public school on Oahu. I work two jobs to make ends meet. If we lose our differential pay, I will need to work longer hours at my second job to pay my rent and to feed myself. Please consider continuing the differential pay.

Thank you,
Electra Spaulding

Gmail

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

Testimony for July 23, 2020 meeting

Sharlene Curry <sharlene0620@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:47 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sharlene Curry, FSC Special Education Teacher, Kaua'i High School

General Business Meeting

Agenda Item VI G.

Opposed

I am a special education teacher and I, as well as several of my colleagues, made the decision to remain in my current position BECAUSE of the differential. Had the decision been made to discontinue the differential prior to 2 weeks before schools are to open, I would have made the choice to seek employment elsewhere. I love my job and I love my students, but I also have to put my family's needs first, and without the differential I cannot afford to work here. I also find it appalling that during this time when stress is at an all time high, and morale is at an all time low, the BOE is considering delivering another blow to the teachers in positions that are hardest for you to staff. I employ you to reconsider discontinuing the differentials. With so many educators already considering leaving their positions or retiring early, you can't afford NOT to continue to fund the differentials. I hope you make the right choice. Our students depend on it.

Thank you,
Sharlene Curry

Gmail

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

Teacher Shortage Differential

Skintwin1 <skintwin1@aol.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

Please reconsider funding the teacher shortage differentials. The differential that I am receiving encouraged me to remain in my current teaching position. Before receiving the differential, I was planning to retire. Without the differentials, you might have more qualified teachers retiring. Please do what's best for our students and reconsider funding the teacher shortage differentials. If Hawaii's teacher shortage continues to grow, who's going to teach our keiki? Our keiki are suffering enough during this pandemic and they need qualified teachers in their classrooms.
Please do what's best for all and continue to fund the teacher shortage differentials.

Mahalo,
Diane Styles
Special Education Teacher
Maemae Elementary School

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Continue Shortage Differentials

Travis Flynn <travis_flynn@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Travis Flynn and I am a Public school teacher in Hilo. I am writing in support of the continuing the shortage differential program that is currently in place but being considered for discontinuation.

The shortage differential encourages me to transition from general education to special education, starting in SY20/21.

For the past 6 years I worked as a EL teacher and RTI Coordinator at Waiakea intermediate school. Over the past six months I did what it took to become licensed in special education and secured a job as a special education teacher at Kaumana Elementary school. While money was not the only motivating factor for this move, the shortage differential had a significant impact on my decision to make this transition.

Please consider my decision to serve as a highly qualified, licensed special education teacher as evidence that shortage differentials do make a difference. I urge you to continue providing shortage differentials this school year and beyond.

Simply put, all students across our state deserve qualified teachers in their classrooms, and the differential absolutely supports making this a reality.

Mahalo,

Travis Flynn
Special Education Teacher
Kaumana Elementary School

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Gmail

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

Do not discontinue teacher funds

Ken Kimmage <kenkimmage@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel it would be a huge impact if the DOE and BOE discontinued the extra funding to the special education teacher program. We are expected to work everyday with students where other teachers are not expected to do this during the start of the school year with the covid situation occurring. Also we have to work with students that have extenuating circumstances.

Gmail

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

Do Not Cut Hard to Staff and SPED differentials

Leonard Fergusen <leonard.fergusen@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Teryl Lowry <Teryl.Lowry@k12.hi.us>

Aloha, I am Len Fergusen, a certified Special Education teacher at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School. It is my understanding that " "the Department is requesting a temporary discontinuance" of these differentials, with the reasoning that "these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus."
Extraordinary challenging is EXACTLY why the differentials should be kept in place. I have found that distance teaching during the fourth quarter of the last school year AND during the current summer school credit recovery program, is more difficult than face to face teaching. The new school year will have a blended learning environment at the best and at the worst schools don't open, as that possibility is being considered. Distance teaching in and of itself is not a problem for adult teachers but it's the ***Distance Learning*** that has become the issue for students. My time spent communicating with and coordinating lessons with my students has quadrupled over a normal face to face teaching format. Students and parents are now my long distance partners in education. My IEP students' learning is especially impacted. For you to ask teachers to do more and at the same time to consider a cut in their pay is NOT the way to achieve our educational goals. I understand that we have budget constraints but please don't compound the budget shortage with our teacher shortage. This state needs to continue to invest in it's citizens for a healthy future. Mahalo

Len Fergusen
Nanakuli High and Intermediate School
808-305-7600
Cell: Call/Text 773-9389
When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.

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

Differing Pay Differentials

Alder Olive <alderolive@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing as a 12 year HI DOE teacher who recently went back to the classroom to use my SPED degree simply to cover the cost of living. These pau differentials brought certified and high qualified teachers out of the woodwork to work in the hardest positions in the DOE. As a SPED teacher, the work load, demand and legal pressure is 10 folds that a general education teacher. If you were to remove this differential, I would leave the DOE altogether. It is not worth the financial hardship anymore. This diffeeential allows me to stay in a profession that I love and am good at. You would be doing a disservice to the highest needs students in the state. For once they are being provided the education they need and deserve. I guarantee I won't be the only SPED teacher leaving the professions if you discontinue this. Also, it's already written into our contract. I can see if you need to readjust next year by why continue to punish our keiki for our states financial problems.

Please reconsider discontinuing these pay differentials

Mahalo,

Alder
Please excuse any errors or typos, this message was sent from my iPhone.

Differential Pay

Sharon Weeks <10028435@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

First, I'd like to thank you for all the support you have shown us teachers during this pandemic and for listening to our concerns.

I am writing re: the cut back on differential pay. I understand that there is a shortage in funding, but I ask that you please consider other options.

I am a special education pre-k teacher. When returning to school this upcoming year, we are the ones servicing those considered needing the most instruction and supports. For the past two weeks, I have been suffering from debilitating anxiety because I don't know how I am going to keep my students and staff safe. I can't figure out how to keep them 6 ft apart. I don't know how I will get the students with sensory issues to wear their masks. I don't know how I am going to teach because close proximity is critical for promoting positive behaviors and for gaining attention in young learners. With all this, I also know remote learning would be even more challenging as I did it when Covid started and only had 2 students participating daily.

I am also trying to accept the fact that I will probably catch Covid because no matter how much I try to avoid getting sick, I catch everything my preschoolers do. I have a student who reads lips, so I will have to remove my mask when I am teaching. Anyone who has been around preschoolers or those with moderate-severe special needs, know they aren't always aware of germs and personal space. They forget to cover their face when they cough or sneeze. They like to put their fingers in their mouths and touch you. As the days get closer and the Covid numbers get higher, I am scared. Our state shut down when our numbers were much lower and now we are reopening.

Please reconsider not cutting back the funding because many special education teachers are at a higher risk of catching the virus due to the close proximity we will need to maintain to manage our students' behaviors and their unawareness of the dangers of the virus.

Thank you,

Sharon Weeks

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

TESTIMONY: Differentials 7/23 @ 1:30pm

Nicholete Ito <nrito@weis.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:58 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

This testimony is regarding the shortage differential pay for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language, and hard to staff locations.

I OPPOSE a temporary discontinuance of the shortage differentials that were implemented in January of 2020. Removing the differentials will guarantee that teachers will vacate positions, effectively making an already difficult situation infinitely worse. Special Education teachers will need to be assessing and adjusting IEPs for every SPED student in the state, and we are tasked with doing so in the first quarter of instruction, barring another (nearly certain) school shut down in the event of contagion within schools and their respective communities.

Special Education and other vulnerable students have already been severely impacted by this pandemic, and many SPED, Hawaiian Language, and hard to staff positions were filled upon inception of the differentials. These staffing gains would be undone with the suspension of the differentials which will result in SPED positions being staffed by subs and non-SPED-certified teachers, leaving the DOE vulnerable to the liabilities that unqualified staff brings to legally binding documents.

On a personal level, due to the COVID19 pandemic, when I return to school on July 30th, I will be tasked with teaching Special Education AND General Education while simultaneously carrying my caseload. I received my SPED certification immediately after differentials were announced, and I can say with absolute certainty, that I will not return to SPED if the differentials are temporarily discontinued.

I will also add that the BOE would be acting in bad faith to temporarily discontinue the differentials after all teacher transfer periods have closed and teaching lines have been determined - leaving teachers who made decisions based on the differentials with no recourse other than to do the work without the promised pay or to quit.

Thanks,
Nicholete Ito
6-8 Special Education English Language Arts
Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate School
(808) 259-0460
Support Literacy! DONATE HERE

"One does not simply walk into Mordor." - J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

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>

Please fund teacher shortage differential

Faith Tom <ftom1060@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm writing to you to continue funding the teacher shortage differential. This was one of the reasons that I decided to teach another year... These past few months have been very challenging and if you discontinue to fund the teacher shortage differential I may consider retiring from the teaching profession. I would appreciate it if you continue to fund the differential. Thank you!

Gmail

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

Differentials

Dr. Leilani Roberts <leishantel.roberts@live.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:01 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Hawaii BOE,

Please, Do Not Discontinue the Shortage Differentials for Special Education, Hard-To-Staff, and Hawaiian Immersion.

For the Future of Our Haumana and Our Educator's...

Mahalo,
L.S. Roberts

Get Outlook for iOS

Gmail

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

Testimony

Edna Limon <edna_limon@lahaina.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My dear Board of Educators,

I am Edna Limon , a Special Education teacher at Lahainaluna High School (Maui). I am asking your good governance that please continue to finance our shortage differentials. I been an educator for 20 yrs, our salaries are not enough for our daily living in Hawaii. To supplement my earnings I do have a part time job. But I was furloughed last March . My husband hours is cut from 36 to 24 hours a week . What will happen to my family , house (mortgage), and other bills. I know that we are depending on our leaders to help us in our needs. I am begging you to continue giving our differentials . This additional compensation will really make a difference in our lives..Hoping for your kind consideration and support to all educators ..

Sincerely,
Edna Limon
Special Education Teacher
Maui Hawaii

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Pay differential for special education teachers

Bill Lawrenz <lavahut@mac.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education members,

I am writing as a parent of a 9 year old son who has multiple disabilities. Teaching special needs students is a very difficult job. Without the pay differential, the state of Hawaii will continue to lose special education teachers. My son's former special education teachers at Mt view elementary moved back to the mainland where they are compensated better and have more reasonable caseload.

Please reject the proposal to discontinue the pay differential and offer special education services that our keiki deserve.

Thank you,
Bill Lawrenz
Hilo, Hawaii

Gmail

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

Testimony of a new Special Education teacher

Scott Kazarian <scottkazarian@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha! The HSTA asked us to share in regards to the SpEd teacher shortage differential.

I love students and learning. Teaching is something that I hope to do the rest of my life.

I have a wife and four young boys in the DOE. My wife helps run our elementary school PTO and I volunteer in my middle school sons school robotics team. We are invested!

I decided to switch careers and became an emergency hire for 2019-2020 as I enrolled in a teaching program. I finished the program and just became a licensed teacher! :)

I was already cleared to teach social studies as a part of my license and a big reason I studied and passed the Special Education license test was the shortage differential. I saw it as an investment in my new career, a way to fill a huge need in the DOE and a way of better providing for my family.

The agreement as I understood it was that if I added Special Education I would receive the shortage differential. To change that now seems like going back on your word and not living up to the agreement that began in January of 2019 when this rolled out.

The goal was to get new SpEd teachers and retain current SpEd teachers. In my case it worked and I'm ready and excited to start the new school year. To get rid of the differential now would be to discontinue something that works, is vital to our vulnerable students and would inevitably promote distrust in future incentive opportunities.

On behalf of my students and my family I plead with you to keep the Special Education shortage differential.

Mahalo!

SK :)

Scott Kazarian

Scottkazarian@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Please reject the proposal to stop teacher differentials!

Arania Manumaleuna <aramamoe@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

What a disservice to our sped teachers if we stop the differential. Give them what was promised and what's rightfully earned. They continue to teach even in these horrible days ahead. Do the right thing!

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Special Education Differentials

Madelyn Jaimes <maddy-515@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:09 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
My name is Madelyn Jaimes and I am a special education teacher in Kauai. Cutting the special education differentials would be a GREAT disservice to special education teachers throughout the state for a number of reasons.
1. There is still a shortage of special education teachers. I just recently transferred to a school that will most likely not have enough teachers for the positions at the school and there will be a long term sub. This creates more work for the rest of the teachers at the school as we need to help oversee that teacher but also write all of their legal documents like IEPs etc and hold the meetings.
2. While I absolutely love the kids I work with there are extra strains put on me as a teacher especially when it comes to student behaviors. In the 3 years as a special education teacher I have been hit, kicked, bitten, head butted, had my hair pulled etc. COUNTLESS times! Managed tantrums that last for hours all while keeping my cool and keeping my other students safe. It is physically and emotionally draining.
3. Next is the paperwork. While all teachers have paperwork a special education teacher has exponentially more than other teachers we have ieps, reevaluations, behavior plans, and more. Many think we have one meeting a year for each student and that is all, but that is a false narrative. Many students have multiple meetings a year with pages of paperwork that comes with each meeting. We are told our 45 minutes of prep time is to be used for our IEPs etc. How can I do that when like all of the other teachers I need to plan individualized lessons for each of my students. This often means I spend my weekends and evenings working on paperwork, when I should be spending time with my family and recouping from the day and week before.
4. This year there has been even more meetings and paperwork added to our already overfilled plates. We have to meet with each one of our students families to discuss making up for lost instructional time during 4th quarter even though we continued to teach our student the best we could from home during a global pandemic. All while continuing to take data for progress reports we still had to complete (unlike general education teachers who didn't have to do grades,) and had to keep track and log every interaction with parents, students and instruction that was sent home.

With all this said, I love my job and for as long as I can remember I've wanted to be a teacher and often can't see myself doing anything else. At the same time over the past 3 years especially this past year I've thought about making a career change or testing the waters in a general education classroom. The special education differential was one of the benefits that convinced me to stick it out.
I hope you can see that the differential is making an impact on retaining teachers and giving the keiki in Hawaii the education they deserve.
Thank you for your time,
Madelyn Jaimes

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Reference shortage differential

Georgianna Hashimoto <2xlinlife@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Georgianna Hashimoto I am a special education teacher at Ha'aheo Elementary school. I am writing because as you know there is a major shortage of teachers in our field. With that said I was so appreciative when the increase in pay occurred. I felt validated, humbled and appreciated for the after school hours and many late night hours I put in to writing IEP's. Coordinating meetings along with teaching our most loving and vulnerable students all day and working on lesson planning and attending meetings, For once I was feeling valued for my service. I am in this field because I love what I do, knowing you valued my efforts and dedication was humbling and I was so grateful.

My question now is do you not think we are worthy enough? How much more do we need to do to prove we are a valuable part of the DOE. You and parents entrust us with children who need teachers to be of direct support and have resilience, patience and flexibility. I give everything I have to my students.

Remember we need to close the gap not widen it . Removing the differential just shows how much our work means to you. People do better when they feel cared for, valued and needed. If this differential is removed it tells me how much you actually care about our service and the work I do.

Thank you,
Georgianna Hashimoto

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Shortage differentials

Samantha Hucks <samantha.hucks@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel it is important that all teachers feel equally valued. Since all teachers educate students with disabilities, it would only be fair that ALL teachers receive the differential, not only the sped teachers. The special education teachers will already receive 3 hours of prep time per student IEP. I think it would be more wise for the Department of Education to save the money for the following year's shortages for all teachers.

Gmail

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

Teacher differentials

Anthony Martinez <kalehuawehe808@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:16 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Requesting that teacher differentials are sustained for teachers for all school years. This should not be an area of discussion for budget cuts.

Sincerely.
Tony Martinez
Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Shortage Differentials

Jeremy <jeremy.bowlin@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:17 PM
To: "testimony. BOE@boe. hawaii. gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

It is imperative that you keep shortage differentials in place. Teachers are already hesitant to return with a pandemic occurring. We are also facing a teacher/professional shortage in the areas the differentials cover. Every other state is competing for teachers, professionals, and subs. Not to mention the higher paying work teachers can do in fields outside education. Removing differentials will make Hawaii education non-competitive, and devastate schools in our state.

Gmail

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

KEEP DIFFERENTIALS FOR TEACHERS

DE'LAINE G. <guypa2md@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:17 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

KEEP DIFFERENTIALS FOR TEACHERS
this is so IMPORTANT for the teachers who are
Teaching in the High Risk areas of
Special Education, Hawaiian Language Immersion and Hard-to-Staff schools.
We need this money to continue to educate our students in these areas and be able to
“LIVE, SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN HAWAII”

Gmail

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

Testimony

Idanelis Ferrera Gomez <idanelis.ferrera_gomez@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on **Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

My name is Idanelis Ferrera, I am a 5th grade teacher at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary. Our school is a designated hard to staff school due to its isolated geographical location and high teacher turnover rate. The 2020-2021 school year will be my fourth year in the classroom. For all four years I have been at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary. I moved from the mainland to teach and my first year teaching in Hawai'i was also my first year teaching ever. The first two years were difficult not only because of the challenges that come with being a new teacher but also because of the economic hardships that arise from living in a state with one of the highest costs of living and one of the lowest teaching salaries. Because of the continued increases in the cost of living here I was contemplating moving back to the mainland for the 2020-2021 school year, that is until our union bargained effectively and successfully to get teachers in hard to staff and special education positions the necessary monetary compensation to curve the teacher shortage that this state suffers from.

To discontinue this extra compensation will be devastating to many teachers across the state including myself. This additional compensation is the only way I was going to be able to afford staying in Hawai'i to continue teaching this school year. Stripping us of this compensation as we are all getting ready to begin the new school year means those of us that had been thinking of moving away are now left with very few options, we cannot apply to jobs elsewhere and are essentially stuck in a difficult financial situation at the mercy of the board's decision. This will have detrimental effects on Hawaii's keiki and will exacerbate teacher shortages across the state. Education should never be at the top of the list when making budget cuts and if Hawai'i wants to continue to be the worst in the nation in education this will surely solidify our place.

Sincerely,
Idanelis Ferrera

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Gmail

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

Continued Funding for Teacher Shortage Differential

Katherine Shinsato <kshinsato2019@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting this as a testimony to encourage the continuation of the funding for the teacher shortage differential.

I understand that there are many people hurting right now as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a very trying time for many from a financial standpoint, and the state's revenue and budget have been greatly impacted as a result of the reduced economic activity.

Please know that I feel a true sense of gratitude to still have a job to support my family and myself. I am also grateful to have a job that truly brings me joy and a sense of fulfillment, because I am able to build positive relationships with my students, watch them grow and become individuals that contribute to their community, and play an important role in that growth. I did not go into this profession to become rich in the financial sense.

There are so many more legal implications and responsibilities that are tethered to the job of being a Special Education teacher. Additionally, they have so much paperwork and so many meetings that go along with developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student. These are just a few reasons why many teachers are apprehensive to make the switch. As a teacher that just transferred into a special education position for the upcoming school year, I did not make this decision lightly. This population of students is more vulnerable and is in even more need of a strong teacher to make up for the extended time away from in-person instruction, and I hoped to fill that role.

Please know that I did not make the decision to make the switch because of the differential, but it definitely was another reason that encouraged me to make this switch in my career. As someone that is planning on trying to have children within the next several years, the differential will make a huge difference to my family. I am sure that other teachers have similar sentiments as well. If you discontinue the differential, I think many educators, like myself, will feel a sense of betrayal as a result of you going back on your promise to us.

If you continue with this proposal to cut the differentials, you will be discouraging teachers who were promised an increase in their pay from staying in those positions or continuing with teaching altogether. During the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, teachers have had to pivot in major ways from in-person teaching to online teaching. This is a feat that is often unrecognized as being a major challenge and switch in the jobs of teachers. Although all teachers have had to make this switch and deserve a pay raise, teachers in Special Education positions needed to incorporate an extra layer of brainstorming and problem solving to meet students' needs, because their students have an extra set of needs that can be more challenging to meet from a distance. What makes it even more challenging is that each child in their class comes with legally binding contracts that require them to meet goals and needs that were set. I cannot even fathom the challenges that Special Education teachers had to do during this past school year. Even with the upcoming school year, Special Education teachers need to relook at the students' IEPs to problem solve how to support students meet their goals, support students that even more need closer contact to support (think Fully Self-Contained and preschool settings) when we know it may be unsafe for us to do so, among other challenges that come along with being a Special Education teacher. I wanted to bring this to your attention, because it takes such special people to be Special Education teachers. Not everyone wants to take these positions, thus showing the importance of the implementation of the differential in the first place.

I am urging you to support both Special Education teachers and teachers at hard-to-staff locations and keep your promises to them. I fear that many of these educators will leave their positions or retire, because this is another time where the department is threatening to cut teachers' salary. Teachers in Special Education positions or at hard-to-staff locations are the ones taking the positions that many others will not. Please look at the long term outcomes and implications that cutting teachers' salaries will have.

Sincerely,

Katherine Shinsato

Gmail

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

Testimony

Patricia de Los Santos <ariagirl08@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Patricia de Los Santos and I live in the Kipapa Elementary school district in Mililani, Hawaii. I am not an educator but I am related to one and I have many friends that are. I am submitting my testimony in opposition of cutting funding for special education. We need more teachers in Hawaii, more qualified and high-caliber teachers in the Hawaii school system that by taking funding from this program will hurt the children of Hawaii and our future even more. Our future is at stake. This is why I am opposed.

Thank you,
Patricia de Los Santos

Gmail

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

Leave Differentials Alone

Monica Yasuda <monica_yasuda@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

I have been a teacher for over 21 years. 19 of those years have been spent as a high school teacher at one of the most challenging schools in the State on the Leeward Coast. It is very demeaning for our Hawaii leaders to even consider cutting this Hard-to-Fill Differential. If education is essential, WHY is cutting this funding even an option?

Cutting this funding will be one of the main contributing factors as to WHY there will be an even higher teacher turnover at Leeward Coast and other Hard-to-Fill schools. If you cut any more funding to education, YOU will be the reason WHY highly qualified, certified teachers leave. YOU will be the reason WHY students have classes filled with substitutes who are unfamiliar with the course content and unqualified to teach. And, YOU will be the reason WHY students in Hard-to-Fill schools continue to fall further behind.

Is this what YOU want? If you allow the Hard-to-Fill Differential to be even temporarily cut, just know that this is your Kuleana and contribution to the problem. This is how you contribute to the education and future of Hawai'i's keiki. And, this is how you serve your community, by doing a disservice to the communities you serve.

Please do the right thing and leave the Hard-to-Fill Differential alone.

Sincerely,

Monica Yasuda
Nanakuli High and Intermediate Teacher

-Monica
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Sped differential

bkraimer <bkraimer@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha.

Just wanted to let you know that I needed to go into a pool today because it was so hot and my student in a wheelchair loved it. There are not many odd is who want to go the extra mile for special needs and taking away the benefit of showing us that these children matter is simply not right. Who else is going to teach them, get food thrown at them, chesne their diaper. I think not a gen ed teacher.

I appreciate the BOE showing me that I am noticed.

Beth Kraimer
Kauai DOE
Sped PreK

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S7.

Gmail

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

Action Item G

Ilima Hose <ilimahose@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:32 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!

My name is Michelle ‘Ilima Hose. I have been a teacher in Hawai’i for 15 years now, both in the DOE as well as our public charter schools, even a summer at a private school. I have taught grades K-12 and have dedicated my life to my passion of educating our youth and future generations in our native tongue and an official language of our state, the Hawaiian language. I am currently the one and only kindergarten Hawaiian medium education educator at Kawaikini NCPCS on the island of Kaua’i. I have been licensed for the last 15 years through the HTSB and I hold a BA in Hawaiian Studies with an emphasis in Hawaiian language, a teaching certificate through Kahuawaiola, as well as an MA in Indigenous Language and Culture Education. My license proves my qualification for the Hawaiian language differential pay.

I am writing to urge each of you on the board of education to continue funding for teacher shortage differentials for the upcoming school year 2020-2021. I was blessed to have received the Hawaiian language differential this past school year, the $4,000, half of the actual differential being that it was granted halfway through the year. However, please note that I DID NOT RECEIVE THIS DIFFERENTIAL FROM THE BOE, AS THE BOE INSISTED THAT THIS FUNDING GRANTED WERE ONLY FOR DOE SCHOOLS! INSTEAD OUR GENEROUS AND HARD WORKING GOVERNING BOARD OF KAWAIKINI NCPCS WAS ABLE TO SEEK FUNDING TO ALLOW OUR QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO RECEIVE SUCH A WELL DESERVED RAISE. With that being said, please keep in mind that MANY CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS are highly qualified and deserve this differential pay just as much as any qualified DOE teacher, we are all licensed through the HTSB and whether we work in the DOE or at a public charter schools, we all serve the public, and the youth of Hawai’i as a whole!

Our school sought funding for half a year and trying to secure more for another has proven to be a challenge. More so, I do not feel it is fair that only DOE teachers will receive this pay if granted by the BOE. We work just as hard in a charter school and many times harder as a Hawaiian language medium educator being that we spend so much time creating Hawaiian language, culturally appropriate educational materials from scratch. Therefore, as the board who serves ALL PUBLIC education in Hawai’i, please do the right thing and give the teachers of Hawai’i what we deserve.

For some insight, this differential pay has helped me and my family to finally reach some kind of stability financially after all these years in teaching. We are finally homeowners and have been for the last few months due to this additional but well deserved pay. I have 2 school aged children, both in Hawaiian language medium schools and as a parent, I am blessed to know that my children also have highly qualified teachers in the Hawaiian language educating them. I am 100% sure that this differential pay has had a positive impact on my whole family’s life, health, and wellness overall.

I can guarantee you all that retracting this differential pay that was already promised will have a negative impact statewide. Without this differential, personally, I am debating whether or not I can return to teaching this upcoming year. Financially, my family will struggle, even more so through these trying times. I love my job and I love my students, but such a huge cut in pay will be disastrous for us and many others! As a mother, I understand that many other teachers will leave seeking a more financially stable occupation and I do not blame them. I personally am more comfortable knowing that highly qualified teachers are educating my children.

Again, please take all of this into consideration. I am forever thankful if these differentials are approved for ALL PUBLIC TEACHERS, BOTH IN THE DOE AND IN CHARTER SCHOOLS. Mahalo nui loa!

Na’u me ke aloha a me ka mahalo palena ‘ole,
na Michelle ‘Ilima Hose

Gmail

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

Please continue to fund SPED differentials

Dina Hussey <dina.hussey@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Dina Hussey and I am a special education teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School. When school begins in a few weeks, my colleagues and I will return to our classrooms to service the neediest learners. Due to the varying needs of these students, many of us will not be able to maintain adequate "social distancing" throughout the day. Our students' needs range from changing and feeding to toileting and full physical prompting/support. Special education teachers understand that often our students require intense interventions and many may still be working through difficult behavioral issues that stem from their communication needs or low frustration tolerance.

In normal times, the role of a special education teacher is challenging at best. Generally speaking, the intangible rewards balance the difficulties encountered from day to day. However, in the midst of this pandemic, all teachers are courageously placing themselves in a tumultuous situation, yet many special education teachers will be unable to afford themselves the precautionary distancing that might serve to keep them safer. Many will boldly answer the call to serve, while some may not.

Those of us who remain in the profession for longer than a few years understand the risks inherent in the job and gladly accept the responsibility. Sadly, we are few in number and our efforts are impacted by the transiency of newcomers to the field. Often positions are filled by adults who do not hold the necessary credentials or training to adequately meet the needs of our students. The difficulties that the adults face hinder them from persevering long enough to gain the experience necessary for them to thrive. These "emergency hires" are indeed responding to a very real and imminent emergency. There is a shortage of qualified special education teachers across the state which leads to inevitable, systemic mediocrity in an overtaxed system. In order to ease the burden it is imperative that the SPED differentials remain in place so we are able to keep the qualified teachers we have, and nurture those up and coming. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Dina Hussey
(808)389-4138

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ted E <tede83@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

I have been a special education teacher for twelve and a half years, and currently receive the extra compensation. The extra compensation is a major reason I stayed in my position. Prior to receiving the compensation, I was deeply considering moving to another position or possibly leaving the DOE altogether. My position is very challenging, and I work extremely hard for the salary I receive. The extra compensation allows me to stay in my position while also being better able to make ends meet at home.

We have an extremely strong special education program at Jarrett Middle School where students and families GE from all over the island to receive our services. We work extremely hard and are dedicated to meeting each and every students' needs. Taking away our well deserved pay would be a slap in the face to me, my team, and every other sped teacher in the state.

Considering how hard I worked before and during the school closure to meet my students' needs, and knowing how hard my position will be this 20-21 school year, I definitely deserve this extra compensation. As do all sped teachers.

You can guarantee that I will leave special education and possibly the DOE completely this year if the extra compensation is retracted. Please consider how important this is to the many teachers, students, and families here in the islands and continue to support us.

Thank you for your time,
Ted Edwards
Special Education Teacher/ Department Chair
William P. Jarrett Middle School

Gmail

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

Please reject the proposed special ed differential

Tai Baird <bair6939@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Tai Baird and I recently went into special education to assist my family during CoVid 19. The extra money will make a huge difference to my pay and allows me to pay my cost of living while being a teacher here in Hawaii. Please keep the differentials because it also means that we will continue to get teachers like myself who specifically went into special education because we left general education. Please keep our differentials....
Thank you ! Mahalo! Tai Baird second grade special ed Kahului Elementary, island of Maui

Gmail

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

PLEASE Continue Funding Teacher Shortage Differentials

Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:40 PM

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I do not teach at a Hawaiian immersion school.

I do not teach in a hard to staff location.

I am not a special education teacher.

However, I am emailing my testimony, because taking anything away from ANY of us is WRONG.

I have friends who work in “difficult to staff” areas. Those teachers keep food and clothes for their kids, because sometimes they come to school with NOTHING. They pay for those things out of their OWN POCKET most of the time.

Not to mention, Hawaii already has over 500 special education classrooms without licensed teachers.

Please do not take their differential away from them.

Sincerely,

Richard Stange

Gmail

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

Testimony

Laura Phillips <lauraphillips909@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

July 17, 2020

To Hawaii Board of Education,

I am testifying to REJECT on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

We need to continue to fund extra compensation for classroom teachers in hard to fill positions. All children need a certified credential now more than ever. Distance learning and the unknown factors in education during the COVID crisis are putting a strain on all teachers. We don't want to lose any teachers in positions that are already hard to staff. Our keiki deserve credential teachers, especially right now with limited Face to Face teaching. Credential teachers have been proven to be more effective in teaching and our keiki need good teachers more than ever right now. Please continue to fund extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Thank you for your consideration in this manner.

Laura Phillips
Special Education Teacher at Hilo Union Elementary
Parent of Child with Special Needs at Ha'aheo Elementary

Gmail

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

Testimony

Paul McDonnell <mrmcdo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying against Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Dear BOE,

Don't renege (to not do what one said one would definitely do) on your agreement to provide extra compensation for classroom teachers in SPED, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs. I have been a SPED teacher for almost two decades and actually applied for a different high paying DOE job because I was feeling unappreciated and underpaid for all the extra work and challenges involved with being a SPED teacher. However with the extra compensation promised, I felt renewed appreciation and developed a fresh drive to continue to work in this extra-difficult field so I stopped the pursuit of the other job. Now it looks like the BOE might just turn out to be an indian giver. Doh! If the BOE want to take this away, then please take away all the extra work, stress and frustration that comes with teaching in a SPED environment. It's only fair.

In which case, I look forward to this coming school year WITHOUT dealing with any IEP meetings, progress reports, extra assessments, extra data documentation requirements, extra staffing meetings, tweaking curriculums to fit wildly different IEP goals of different SPED students - all of which has nothing to do with ACTUALLY teaching SPED students which comes with a whole other list of challenges that must be overcome. Fair enough?

Do the right thing. Either compensate us, or drastically reduce our work to ensure we don't burn out and/or leave in droves like we always do. Otherwise we're going to be back at square one, or likely worse in the near future. Data shows that the extra compensation was WORKING. Now BOE wants to get rid of something that was clearly working? No, no, and no.

-Paul McDonnell
SPED Teacher
Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind

Gmail

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

BOE to please fund the differential

Robin Mats <desiirob@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Teachers have been struggling for years in hard to fill and SPED positions. After my 26 years in the DOE we finally received compensation. Please don’t take it away at this time of tremendous need when many people are out of work. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Please reject the proposal

808 Nita <808.nita@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a 7th year special education teacher in Hilo and it has been more of a challenge this year, to adjust to distance teaching as some local families do not have access to internet/smart phone and I have worked beyond school day hours to make sure the children's needs have been met. Please reject the proposal to discontinue shortage differentials.

Thank you,
B. Babas
Masters in Education, Special Education
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

teacher pay differentials

Amber Jones <amberlillianjones@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I find it appalling that the state would go back on the one small step they have taken to bolster quality education for our keiki. Teachers in Hawaii already make one of the lowest wages per cost of living in the nation, it would be an embarrassment to take away the one minor thing out DOE has done for teachers filling those hard to staff positions. We pay so much out of pocket already, you can only push teacher compassion to a certain degree before we stand up for ourselves. Find another way!
Thank you,
Amber Jones
K Teacher

Gmail

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

Differentials are important for teachers !!

Bud <bud@commercialvideosolutions.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi my is Bud White I am a special education teacher at Kamilii Elementary. The differential should not be dropped temporarily as it will cause severe economic problems for me and my fellow SpEd teachers. My wife is already been forced out of work and so we are barely able to survive as it is. Remember that SpEd teachers are going to be asked to do even more than were when school starts up. We are tasked with evaluating all of our SpEd students within the first quarter of school. If you do drop this pay differential you will be forcing me and other teachers to move to the mainland in order to survive.

Thank you for your understanding
Bud White

Gmail

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

Differentials

Catherine Baldaino <cbaldaino@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a special education teacher and have been working for DOE since 2000 in various positions. I am also a single mother and prior to the differential I was thinking of quitting or changing careers. I needed to work two jobs just to get by and take care of my child. The differential allowed me to not work two jobs and spend more time with my child.

Aside from my personal/family reasons for needing the differential it also helps with the countless supplies and extra hours that I put in for special education. I'd honestly try to transfer to general education as I am dual certified and have taught general education previously, it was way less extra hours, planning and money.

We are already going into an incredibly scary and difficult situation this school year. Many of us will have to find childcare for our children when they aren't in school and that will just take more money that we don't have. There is already a shortage of teachers and I can only see the numbers going down if the differential is taken away. You can't expect us to walk into a dangerous work environment and be able to give 100% when we are worried and also financially struggling.

Mahalo for your time and understanding.

Gmail

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

http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20Temporary%2

W Cheryl Materne <lavasista@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a special education teacher of 17 years with the same school in DOE. Waiakeawaena El. Hilo. I teach 4th and 5th grade students. Usually the students who have difficulties with behavior management and low functioning academically. When the differential was Promised- I decided not to retire- it made it worth staying a couple more years while we waited for new teachers to come in to special education. We had some amazing possibilities- but this going back on your word is not a good tactic For recruiting and Retaining new Good teachers. It does Not show that you respect teachers and what they do for our students AND for you. It shows that we are not import as not in your eyes- it d sad how's your word is worth nothing. The public sees what your doing- Shame on you for even considering dropping what you promised- Many will leave if you take away what was promised- we are already asked to do more than we're paid for. Unacceptable! So wait, bills I had planned for- because you promised will now become tough choices to fund- you are messing with our security- AND expecting us to risk our lives and families- with a population that already puts us at greater risk-? Again shame on you for even expecting us to accept this.
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

please support teachers

johnny bravoo <jhnnybravoo@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please support the teachers of Hawaii and reject the proposal to stop funding hard to staff school. Teachers are such an important part of society and the future but it seems like we're taken advantage of. We get paid so little for all that we do and now you want to take away the little extra that we're receiving? Take COVID for example.....the BOE is throwing us on the frontline, jeopardizing our health and families health. When I signed up to teach I signed up to teach in a safe environment! Starting on Aug 4 is not safe. The numbers are higher than in March when we closed down. Death rates may be higher for the elderly. Yes thats correct! I can't risk bringing home the virus and infecting my elderly parents. This is something I won't be able to live with. Please think about how much teachers care for our students and please show some aloha for us teachers.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristi Izumoto <kristiizumoto@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am extremely disappointed to hear that there is currently a proposal on the table to cut hard to staff teaching differentials. These discussions really do help staff where Hawaii needs it the most.

I left the DOE 3 years ago for many reasons that make it hard to be a teacher in Hawaii, but pay was a major deciding factor. I was in the middle of making career decisions to best suit my family's needs last winter when I heard about the special education teaching differentials that went into affect last year. This played a MAJOR role in my decision to return to teaching and to a special education classroom since I am dual certified and could have chosen to return to gen ed.

While I would love to say that I love being a teacher and pay does not matter, when you live in a state like Hawaii where the cost of living is atrocious, we really need that extra pay to get by. My family and I own a photography business that has no income coming in currently due to the pandemic. We are going to need to rely on the $10,000 sped differential to help us get by until things can turn around in general with the economy on top of Hawaii's usual cost of living hardships. The differential will make a huge difference in my decision of whether I will remain a teacher and/or in special education in the long run.

I know many teachers this year are going to be counting on this differential to continue to allow them to effectively teach some of Hawaii's hardest hit populations. Please don't take this away from them.

Thank you,
Kristi Izumoto

Gmail

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

Teacher differential pay

Ryan Ideta <lsutennis1@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ryan Ideta and I am a teacher in the Hawaii Department of Education for 16 years. I am also a proud member of the Hawaii State Teachers Association for my entire tenure. Currently, I am a Physical Education teacher at Kea'au Elementary School on the Big Island. Teaching physical education is my passion. I enjoy seeing the excitement and enthusiasm in my students' faces. This shutdown due to Covid-19 has been a challenge. I resorted to weekly videos online to make sure my students kept up their exercise routine. I am thrilled to get back into the classroom to teach my students in the upcoming school year 2020-21.

I was appalled to read an email today stating that the BOE is contemplating taking away the agreed upon teacher pay differentials for the upcoming school year. I understand that everyone is suffering and that there is a shortage of money. In my experiences, I feel like everytime the State of Hawaii needs money, they look to take it away from the teachers of Hawaii. Despite always cutting teachers' salaries, politicians and the people in powerful positions say that education is a top priority. They say the keiki of Hawaii is our future and their education is most important. These people do not realize that by cutting teachers' salaries, they are taking away from our children of Hawaii. Hawaii is toward the bottom of the list when it comes to student performance in national tests. On the same token, Hawaii is near the bottom of the list in teacher salaries.

From my understanding, the BOE agreed upon the pay differential to keep more certified teachers from leaving Hawaii. It is not acceptable to have all those vacant teacher lines filled by substitutes because the pay is so low in Hawaii and people leave Hawaii or the profession of teaching in general. In my opinion, teachers in Hawaii are at the bottom of the barrell when it comes to pay scale. We should not be getting cuts in pay because we are already so underpaid.

I am one of the 4,000 teachers that would be affected by the cut in differential pay. Currently, I am getting the hard-to-fill differential pay. I am happily married with three children. My family depends on my income as I am the primary income provider for my family. Losing the differential pay would affect my family's well being.

I highly urge the Board of Education to reconsider this idea to cut teacher differential pay. Teachers work hard and deserve every penny we earn. Please explore other options to help the state deficit. We need to put our money where our mouth is and help the children of Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Ryan

Gmail

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

Differential

Kryssa Isobe <kryssaa.isobe@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Kryssa Isobe, a 6th grade teacher at Leihoku Elementary in Waianae. I just completed my sixth year at our school. While we all know teachers obviously didn't join this profession for the money, having the hard to staff differential does play a factor in my decision to return each year. Many staff members at my school commutes into Waianae. The commute out to the coast not only requires extra gas money, but our time as well. I live in Kapolei, the next city over, and it still takes me nearly half an hour to get to work. On a day with a major accident or fatality, you're looking at 2+ hours of being stuck in traffic (or worse, being stuck along the coast). In one of my earlier years as a teacher, a traffic accident kept many of my coworkers and me at campus until after 8pm only to have to return less than 12 hours later. This is time spent away from our own families.

Data regularly shows a high turnover rate amongst staff members, low test scores, and poor attendance. By constantly giving some of our neediest and most challenging students consistently new teachers, we are only expanding the gap between them and their peers in other communities across the state. In a typical 6th grade class, I have more than half of them reading two or more grade levels below where they are expected to be. In many cases, some of those readers are reading at a 1st or 2nd grade level. Whereas a teacher in a different community may be differentiating for one to two years below grade level, I am planning to meet the needs for a spectrum of 5-6 years of difference. I love what I do and I love the community I teach in. However, the differential makes me feel like I'm being compensated for the hard work that many other teachers are not willing to do.

By removing the differential, it will make my decision to stay along the leeward coast less difficult. Positions are constantly popping up closer to home and in schools where I wouldn't have to work as hard to meet my students' needs. You can only take for granted the extra work many of us put in for so long. Eventually, many of us will transfer due to being burnt out (and not being compensated for our extra work) and further add to the cycle of high teacher turn over.

I don't want to discredit the work being done in schools that are not hard to staff. However, there are clear and obvious reasons why hard to staff schools are the way they are. If you care about our neediest keiki, you should support trying to retain experienced teachers in these hard to staff communities. Think about the long term effects if you don't.

Respectfully,
Kryssa Isobe

Gmail

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

Shortage differential

Angela Rivero <yokomorris@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please continue to fund shortage deferentials. I am a special educator and this has deferential has encouraged my to stay in the field and let me say, it is not an easy time to want stay in the field. I'm already quite overwhelmed just thinking of the paperwork, meetings, and data collection that needs to be done due to Covid-19 and school hasn't even started.

All students matter and students in these shortage areas should not suffer. The way to balance the budget should not fall in the backs of these children. In the end, these students will be the ones who suffer the most. It is a vulnerable, uncertain time and every students need a qualified, consistent educator more now than ever.

Please support the continuation of the differential pay for my colleagues and I.

Sincerely,

Angela Rivero

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Differentials

Jessica Luzier <jessica.luzier@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:15 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

As a special education teacher I am very upset to hear that differential that were voted and agreed upon have a chance of being taken away in an attempt to balance the budget. Do you think that things were only hard for the government? Many of us lost income already through this. Now you want to take away money from us, just as we head back to a dangerous environment. Many of us work with children who we need to be physically near at times.

Please think about what you're doing. I love my job, but we are not martyrs. We've been barely mentioned or thought of in reopening procedures. This is just another sign to teachers that you don't care about us.

Thank you
Jessica Luzier

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Gmail

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

Continue Differentials PLEASE!

M.Y. <mrs.mommyy@aol.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am in my thirty first year of teaching in the Hawaii County. For the last 12 years, I taught at Honokaa Elementary that was just deemed "hard to place" this past school year. I love teaching in the area where I grew up. I know the families and I know the culture.

Throughout my career, teacher turnover has been a huge concern. I've taught with many qualified and wonderful teachers who left the school. Some have transferred to our local private schools: better pay, better compensation, once tenured some moved out to the more favorable city schools on the island, some moved to the mainland for a better cost of living. Hard to Place Differentials do create a stable qualified faculty that will only have a positive impact for the students.

Our most vulnerable students also need the best qualified teachers possible. Keeping the Special Education Differentials is also important. Qualified Special Education teachers that understand how to reach and teach our local students need to be recognized.

Finally, if I consider retirement in a few years, the differential pay will benefit my final compensation. Should I feel guilty of receiving what is owed to me after teaching over 1000 first graders to early middle schoolers in the past 30 years?

Please continue to fund the differential pay for hard to place areas and special education teachers.

Sincerely,
Marvis Yanagisawa
Honokaa Elementary
Grade 4
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nashea Kitaoka <nashea.carlos@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am Nashea Kitaoka and this will be my third-year as a special education teacher. I fell in love with special education, not for the extra incentives but to truly help the students who need extra support. Since my undergraduate study, I have seen a need of educated certified professionals that know how to help our keiki that need the extra support whether its academic, social or behaviorally.

For the past two school years, I have spent numerous hours and my own resources to create a loving and engaging environment for my students. As a fully self-contained teacher, a lot of the resources cannot be purchased by purchase orders. A lot of the resources I created for my students came out of my own funds. The differential pay has not only helped my family, especially during this time, but also helped me to start programs in my classroom that would have been just a dream.

During this time of uncertainty and having families be affected by our current circumstances, I feel that teachers affected by the decrease from the differential pay will be hurting. The teachers will have the added stress of learning how to navigate our new normal in the classroom as well as finding another way to financially support their families with the decrease in pay.

Please reconsider rejecting the proposal of funding teacher differentials. Our keiki's education and support will be affected as well as our loving and caring teachers.

Mahalo,
Nashea

Gmail

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

Shortage differential testimony

Kumu Kiaha <verne_kiaha@nanakuli.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I urge the Board of Education to reject the proposal to temporarily discontinue the shortage differential pay.
I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion teacher and the only one in Nānākuli Elementary and during these uncertain times it was even more difficult to set up a well-organized learning management system for kaiapuni students, but I did. My sense of relief was not only because of my commitment I have for the keiki, but also knowing that my efforts were finally recognized and comparably rewarding with the differential pay.
Therefore, I urge the board to reject the proposal.

Kumu Kīʻaha
Kula Kaiapuni o Nānākuli
--
Kumu V.L. Nālani Kīʻaha
(808) 668-5813 P-8 or (808) 307-8665

Stay Safe & Stay @ Home.

Gmail

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

Testimonial

Jeanette Crane <jec1959@icloud.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am one of the teachers receiving the differential for Sped and hard to place due to the fact that I live in Lahaina. Every year I spend at least 1200 on curriculum, supplies and now on health promoting supplies. The school I work in is a Title I school with many of the students coming to school in clothes that are too small or slippahs that are broken or too small. I spend my own money to provide for them as well as sometimes providing my own technology for them to utilize in the classroom. Additionally, the cost of living for me is unreasonably high. Yes, I chose to come here, but I came from a Title I School in New Mexico that paid better and subsidized housing for teachers which made it affordable to live there. I also had better insurance coverage for much less than is provided here. While it was not an ideal situation for most, it did at least provide for the basics.If the differentials here are eliminated, it will no longer be affordable for me to live on my income as well as provide the basics for my students. Additionally, taking away my differentials will act only as a way to further diminish my value as an educator with 30+ years of experience. How did we go from unsung heroes to undervalued people who are just expected to magically make it work on our current salaries? I live on a single income pay more than half of my pay on housing, at least 300+ on groceries, 150 a month for medicine, 100+ for electricity, 150 for gas, 75 for car insurance, 59 for internet, at least 50 a month for car maintence, 150 for cell phone service and 200 a month for incidentals. I did not come to Hawaii to get rich, but to provide a service to those in need. I signed a contract which included those differentials and am highly incensed that the state feels it can back out of this agreement. It shows nothing but a lack of respect and appreciation for the work and perseverance of all the teachers here on the islands.

If this is approved, I will have no choice but to void my contract and leave the state. No single person can afford this type of loss to their pay. I know that many, many others will do the same and Hawaii will be again facing shortages in critical areas of need.

Please show the respect that teachers need and deserve by paying us what we need and deserve.

Thank you,

J. Crane
Maui

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Shortage differentials

John Van Ornum <johnster57@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE:
I am a 25 year veteran at Molokai High School. In addition to my teaching duties I volunteer to run the HOSA (health occupations students of America) club at my school. We have three student graduates that are physicians, four nurses, and several others that have gone on to pursue higher education to become professionals. Lowering the pay of those directly responsible for student success will drive teachers out of the profession.

I planned to retire in two more years. There is no one to take my place and long term substitute teachers are difficult to find. You must make the teaching job attractive to get teachers that are qualified to teach, and keep experienced, effective teachers. Currently, across the nation, university education programs are shrinking graduating less individuals with teaching certificates.

Please do not pass the proposal to take away teacher raises.

John Van Ornum EdD
Molokai High School
john_vanornum@molokai.k12.hi.us

Please continue shortage differentials

Gavin Hashimoto <gavin.hashimoto@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:28 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern-

Every year it seems special education teachers have increased responsibilities and pressure. We have new procedures and guidelines, forms, meetings, and protocols that consume any free time that one could possibly get in a busy work week. We go to more meetings due to IEPs, staffings, eligibility's, SFTs, and witness prep for due process cases. We also have some of the most difficult parents to deal with. There is no mystery to why less people stay in special education positions. As a dual prep Sped/elementary education teacher we have to go through more classes to obtain our certification to only get paid the same as a general education teacher. It always surprises people that a special education teacher is paid the same as a general education teacher because they know how much "extra" we need to do on a daily basis, and that doesn't even account for all the prep and work that goes into developing our children's program in class with all their modifications and accommodations. Without this shortage differential you will start to see a quick decline which in return will leave schools and districts scrambling to cover these high need classes with unqualified emergency hires. It leaves the certified Sped teachers to help carry the burden of emergency hires, by inputting their progress reports, sitting in their meetings for assistance, inputting their IEPs, and taking on any pretentious case because of the liability. I have seen so many colleagues come and go throughout the years that it is hard to build a solid sped department within a school. We deal with new and unqualified teachers on a annual basis. Speaking as a sped teacher with over 12 years of experience teaching in Hawaii Kai (where a lot of the high needs parents are), I hope you understand that unqualified teachers cause more harm to our children, schools, and the potential lawsuits from our high needs parents than one could truly expect. Our special needs students have already lost out with this whole COVID-19 situation as it is, please don't make them lose out even more.

Sincerely yours,
Gavin Hashimoto

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Testimony

Crystal Rowe <crystal.rowe@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha!

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Crystal Rowe and I am a SPED Transition Teacher at Kapa'a High School on Kaua'i. In addition, I do the SEVR Work Study program as well as co-teach an Employment Skills class for one period. The rest of the day is spent interviewing, observing, and assisting students with their transition plans as part of their IEPs.

I started teaching in 1977 at a time when SPED teachers flooded the teaching market. I was able to secure a half-time teaching position at Kalaheo Elementary School. Due to a SPED Teacher's resignation, I was offered a full-time position after two years and have taught ever since in full-time SPED lines at both Kapa'a Middle and Kapa'a High. I have taught grades K-12 in SPED and started the Community-Based Instruction functional programs at the high school. I am now on my 14th principal!! When I started teaching, the first IEPs were being rolled out. Please believe me when I say I've seen a lot of SPED history in Hawai'i. I was a SPED teacher during the consent decree and am now teaching the grandchildren of children I taught as a new teacher.

I have remained loyal to the field as I watched many colleagues go into General Education, become administrators, SSCs, retired, resigned, or left to return to the mainland. Licensed and qualified teachers in Special Education have become rare. I've seen very unqualified teachers sink while navigating the SPED profession. I've seen the attempts by the DOE to fast forward training programs to get more teachers certified in SPED to meet the rising demand for teachers. It has meant that those of us who are licensed in SPED and in the field have had to mentor and often took on another teacher's load in order to keep the program afloat and in compliance with federal and state laws.

It was quite a victory to see that the present Superintendent, Governor, and BOE gave differentials to those of us in SPED, Hawaiian Immersion, and Hard to staff areas. I felt valued and recognized after all these years. Finally, all those years of acknowledging these critical areas had a viable solution! Now, I'm hearing that there is a possibility of discontinuing these differentials in response to the economical crisis due to Covid-19.

We know that these differentials have done exactly what it set out to do which is to attract and retain SPED teachers so that we can fully serve our children with certified teachers. To stop these differentials even temporarily will move us backwards into a position that we may never recover from. The teamwork between the State entities showed a bold move to solve a pressing problem. It would be devastating to the teachers that benefit from this who depend on this differential to live and pay the myriad of bills that are required to live in Hawai'i. We do not want to go backwards. These times, while uncertain, call for progressive action not a timid move

to what we knew before. It will be a blow to the morale and integrity of those in the field who have contributed to the legacy of education.

I urge you to continue these differentials and seek another innovative solution to the pressing financial problems. To do otherwise would invite unintended consequences and a growing distrust of the system that many of us have faithfully served.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Please continue to move us forward.

Sincerely,

Crystal M. V. Rowe

Educator

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Gmail

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

Please keep differentials in place

Steven Aquino-Johnson <sw.aquino@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:28 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Steven Aquino-Johnson and I am a SPED teacher at Waialua High and Intermediate. I am writing this email to urge you to please reconsider keeping the pay differentials in place for Special Education, Hawaiian language immersion, and schools that are hard-to-staff. Being a SPED teacher for the last three years at Waialua has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I enjoy working with the kids, celebrating their successes, and being able to advocate for them and their families on and off campus. However, my ability to do so to the best of my ability is severely hindered by the low salary for teachers and the high cost of living on the islands.

For the entirety of my employment with the DOE I also had to work other jobs just to provide for my family. The pay was just not good enough to cover my family's expenses and I remember a few periods of time where we would eat straight instant noodles for days at a time. My first year on island, all we could afford was a single one-bedroom apartment in Wahiawa - this 350 sq ft apartment obviously was NOT meant to accommodate a family of four, but that's all we could afford. If it wasn't for me working other jobs as well as my DOE SPED teaching job we would have never been able to move into a slightly larger place and improve our living situation. Now, as you all know SPED teachers must stay after, well beyond normal working hours to attend meetings with parents, as well as to prepare special education documentation, plan for accommodations, and meet with co-teachers to ensure that their students' needs are being provided for. This would often conflict with my own needs and responsibilities to provide for my own family, as I would often have to decide between spending more time advocating for my student(s), or leaving meetings early (or not being able to attend at all) just so I could make it to my second job. The pay differential eliminates the need for me to maintain a second income and allows me to focus on my primary role as an educator, without having to worry if my children will have food to eat and a place to sleep every night.

Although it has only been in place for one semester the pay differentials have already had drastic effects on our SPED department and school. For starters, this coming school year will be the first school year, since I have started working here, that we will have 100% qualified SPED teachers in our classrooms (this has not been the case for the last 4 years!). Our teachers have been staying after school longer, our department has been meeting with each other more often to discuss strategies and supports, and overall I can tell that everyone is a lot more invested in the keiki. Since I have been here, we have had SPED teachers leave EVERY-SINGLE-YEAR. Some left the profession entirely and others moved to the mainland or other countries for better pay/opportunities. These positions were never filled and we had to rely on full-time subs constantly... This put even more stress and strain on the department because the full-time subs were not able to take on a caseload, prepare IEPs, or even attend meetings after school (they were not paid for that, so why would they bother??)... This job is incredibly taxing on educators and I can understand why my colleagues decided to leave when they did. The pay differentials are a great way to keep quality educators in our schools and keep the students from feeling like they are being abandoned every single school year. I strongly feel that if we lose the differential that this would put an unnecessary strain on teachers and families, and we will lose valuable teachers all over again. Without a doubt this would be a disservice to students and their families. The kids deserve better and I hope that you will choose to keep them in mind when you discuss the decision to temporarily discontinue the pay differentials not only for SPED positions, but for teachers in Hawaiian language immersion schools, and hard-to-staff areas as well. Please do not abandon our students. And please do not abandon our teachers.

Very Sincerely,
Steven Aquino-Johnson

Gmail

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

Drop in pay

Vehia Goo <vehia.goo@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Thank you for your continued leadership during this trying time. I am sure you've heard from many already so let me be the next to express how thankful I am that you are not seriously considering passing the proposal that would effectively drop the pay of nearly 4,000 public educators. As you know, this would be a devastating blow to veteran teachers during a time when economic stresses are the most pronounced. However, since you fully appreciate the difficulty for teachers that passing this proposal on differentials would impose, let me congratulate you on standing firm for the well-being of our state by standing firmly on the principles that make Hawai'i a rare pandemic success story in our country.

Blessings on your deliberations,

Vehia Goo

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY July 23rd Meeting

Katie Hillstead <khillste@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Katie Hillstead and I am a teacher at Waianae Elementary School.

I am writing testimony to advocate for the continuation of shortage differentials. The pandemic has drastically affected the community I work in, my family, and the state of Hawaii as a whole. As a school, 3 veteran teachers retired due to the stress of distance learning and the unknown of the pandemic.

The differentials have helped us to secure highly qualified teachers for special education and general education lines in their place. Without these differentials, I fear we may lose teachers on the coast once again.

Let's not make it harder for schools in rural areas to retain teachers during a pandemic. For many teachers, their family is solely relying on their income to make ends meet during the pandemic. This is a fact for my family. If I lose the differential pay, I won't be able to make my mortgage payment since my fiance was laid off due to COVID. Please, please, use other sources of funding to make up for the budget shortfalls.

Thank you for your consideration,
Katie Hillstead

Gmail

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

Testimony item G

Libby Lenzer <libby.lenzer@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a special education teacher at Kainalu Elementary. I have been a special education teacher for 18 years for the DOE. Last year was the first time I felt more adequately compensated for the extremely arduous job I have dedicated myself to. I was seriously considering leaving teaching early before the differential; the long hours, challenging students, extra paperwork, meetings, and expectations beyond the school day had become too stressful for me. The extra pay helped me take care of my expenses and give me some relief from financial hardship. This gave me incentive to stay in my position. If this differential is taken away I will again be in the position of deciding whether to leave the DOE and even the islands. Please don't put me in this place. I need this incentive and additional money.
Thank you,
Libby Lenzer

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

July 23rd Action Items

Cory Horwitz <corymhorwitz@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:47 PM
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing to you today as a parent of three children who are students in the HIDOE and also as a Special Education Teacher currently working on the island of Maui. My household is one of the many multi-generational households in Maui County. The HIDOE continues to make it extremely difficult for our family to return to school.

As a parent, I am disappointed with my children's school plans. If I send my oldest daughter back to school on campus she will be sharing the same desk that 5 other 11 year olds have sat in. The plan at the school is for students to clean their own desks and classroom computers which means that her safety will depend on 5 other young students to properly sanitizing the desk and computer she uses. Now, this scenario is just for one period of one day. She is required to change classes 6 times in a single day so she is going to be sharing seating and technology with many other students. Her campus is not planning to cohort students or provide any type of small ohana bubbles as described by Superintendent Kishimoto. My 11 year old will be passing classes in the halls with more than 250 individuals 6 times a day. This is unacceptable.

While my younger children's school plan is better aligned with the idea of ohana bubbles, I will not be sending them to school either. I have asked to participate in the distance option. Just today I found out that the distance option includes daily virtual meetings. Not only do the daily, time specific, meetings not work for my family, but I must sign a contract committing to doing this for a full school year. I do not want my children to be doing distance learning for a full school year. I only want them home long enough to keep them safe and healthy.

As a working teacher, how I am going to ensure my children are online with their teachers while I am at work? I feel as if my only option is to withdraw them from the HIDOE and find a homeschool option that will fit our schedule or quit my own job. If I withdraw them, this means that their school, which is already under-enrolled by 47 students and has reported teacher cuts, will now be down 2 more students. The school will miss out on the enrollment funding, yet will still have a legal obligation to accept my children as students should we choose to return at the semester. I know I am not the only parent in this predicament. I have talked to several other parents who also want to keep their kids home for the first quarter while the weak health and safety protocols are still being worked out.

Finally, as if it is not enough that I am currently weighing the possibility of leaving my job to keep my children home, I open my email tonight to find out that the BOE is considering cutting the pay of Special Education teachers. The same Special Education teachers that the Superintendent has mandated additional work for. In the first quarter alone, we are being asked to assess and hold meetings for each of our students. Even with the extra work and pay cut aside, the biggest personal issue to me is that I do not feel that I can protect my own health at work. My school is not planning to use ohana bubbles. Students will be changing classes 6 or more times a day and we are doing little more than to encourage social distancing and ask students to clean the desk before they change classes. The arguments to leave my position with the DOE are becoming more overwhelming by the day.

Please support teachers and students, by creating statewide policies for ohana bubbles and cleaning by professionals. Continue to make sure that schools are doing everything possible to limit exposure and contact. Mandate that all schools follow the DOH recommendations for small groups that do not mix all over campus, and consider starting the year virtually so that schools have time to train teachers on these policies in addition to distance learning.

Mahalo,
Cory Horwitz

Gmail

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

Testimony

Malia Sakaki <sakakimalia@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Malia Hanakahi and I am a Kindergarten teacher on the Wai`anae Coast. I am writing to protest the discontinuance of the differentials we received for half of last year. Being a mom of two children under 3 as well as a homeowner, differential pay is crucial for my families economic wellbeing. While I understand, the entire economy is under tremendous stress due to COVID-19, a decrease in pay would have significant negative impacts on my family. Personally, COVID-19 has put almost all financial burden on my salary alone. My family will not be able to make ends meet with a decrease in pay, and I may have to look for money elsewhere. The amount of time and energy this school year will bring due to hybrid/blended learning and a decrease in pay...will it even be worth it? Should I find a similar paying job with less stress? Teachers will be putting their lives, their families lives at risk, exposing themselves to 20+ different families each week. This is not okay. It is hard to feel respected as a professional when we always have to fight for a living wage.

Regards, Malia Hanakahi

Testimony regarding Shortage Differentials.

Blythe Everett <beverett5@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board,

My name is Blythe Everett and I am a Special Education Teacher at Nimitz Elementary School.

We live and work in paradise. But as I start my 'unlucky' thirteenth year teaching and my sixth in Hawai'i, I have to consider the possibility of not being able to live and teach here much longer.

When I first moved to Honolulu from Denver, I took a significant pay cut in my teaching salary. To compensate, I found a second job in a retail store and a third job working for a local brewery. As of March 2020, both of those jobs have been permanently eliminated. In addition to those financial loses and the potential of losing my differential, my fiancé took a ten percent pay cut to return to his management position in the service industry.

I could expand on the extensive reasons why teachers and myself need more money. But frankly, it's insulting that I have to continue to beg to keep my salary and the now 'bonus compensation' as a Special Education teacher in this state. While I understand COVID-19 has created unprecedented financial burdens on our state that thrives on tourism, my job has not diminished in workload, requirements, or importance. My fellow teachers and I serve a community that struggles to find and maintain qualified personnel. I hold both a General Education and Special Education certification on my teaching license. Why should I 'burden' myself with more academic differentiation, more student behaviors, more paperwork, and more meetings to teach in a position that many would never consider to occupy and the HIDOE seem to diminish the importance of?

Please consider maintaining our differential compensation so that my thirteenth year in education won't be unlucky and I may continue living and teaching in paradise.

Sincerely,

Blythe Everett, MEDL

Gmail

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

Do Not Suspend Differentials

Thomas Bruce <tqbruce@kamaile.org> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:02 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

On Dec. 5, Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. The BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages.

Also during the meeting, Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

This new proposal breaks that pledge. The HIDOE said the Legislature did not approve funding for the differentials as requested. It is now opting to suspend this compensation instead of looking at other areas of its operating budget, as originally promised.-HSTA

I urge you to continue funding for these important differentials.

I changed to a special education because of the incentive. I am certified in special education.

A pay cut may force me to leave the state. Fund the differentials.

Aloha, Thomas Bruce, Kamaile PCS Teacher.

Gmail

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

shortage differentials proposal

Olivia Malcolm <olianna11@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello BOE Board Members,

My name is Olivia Malcolm. I am one of the Hawaii State Teachers working with special education students who are deaf and blind at Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind. I urge you to reject the proposal. While we risk ourselves to teach students during the COVID-19 pandemic when the school reopens, it is important that we continue being appreciated and recognized in importance of our work with deaf/deafblind students. We are one of the most important community workers to promote special education students to thrive. They truly struggled during the school closure and most of them didn't do well during distance learning. So HSDB employees voted to reopen the entire school this year and we are willing to take a risk for their future. Every second of their education is very valuable. Please reject it so that we can continue providing high quality education that knows deaf students the most. We have already struggled with teacher shortage and we have already experienced few candidates backing out because of the fear of being infected. So it is important to keep the differential pay for us, the teachers who are terrified to work at school during covid-19 pandemic. The differential pay plays important role in our life changing decisions. Please continue recognize and appreciate our work with special education students. It means a lot to us.

Thank you for your time.

Take care,

Olivia Malcolm

Gmail

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

Differentials

Christy Vien <christyvien@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The differential pay for teachers is necessary. Teacher pay in Hawaii is low for the cost of living. I have taught in the same school for six years in kona. I am a single person with a masters degree in education. It is difficult to afford living on my one salary here. This differential is needed in order to keep teachers in the profession.

How is it that government money allowed the unemployed to make $1,200/week when that is significantly more that a teachers (my) normal salary? In addition to that $1,200, ebt was another $500/month for a single unemployed person. How is our government funding the unemployed way beyond a typical teacher salary, but unwilling to continue paying teachers their contracted salary? Isn't the approved differential intended to make up for that fact that teachers have been underpaid, which has led to a teacher shortage crises? Given the new demands that the current pandemic is putting on teachers, now is not the time to cut teacher pay. Keeping teachers paid is crucial for their ability to make ends meet Many teachers I know, including myself often work a 2nd job to make ends meet. The pandemic has shut down those opportunities, but our salary makes us ineligible for any unemployment benefits. To keep our teachers, to keep our economy going, we need to keep paying teachers this differential.

Christina Vien
Kealakehe elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

katielrobinson10@gmail.com <katielrobinson10@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

My name is Katie Robinson and I am a special education teachers at Ben Parker elementary school. I am emailing in regards Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. We are all well aware that teachers in the state of Hawaii are not being paid our worth. Teachers go out of their way paying from their own pockets in order to provide school supplies and basic necessities for their students. This email is not about all teachers. Selfishly, this email is about me.

You should know, I am a PROUD special education teacher. I whole-heartedly love my job and my students. I became a special education teacher because of the students and decided to get my masters in order to be a highly qualified and effective teacher for one of the groups of students that need effective teachers the most. I do not love the lack of respect from the state and the recent decisions being made by the BOE. This past school year, I was highly considering moving states because of the salary that special education teachers make in Hawaii compared to other states. I was also looking into quitting the DOE and working in private schools. You see, as a teacher with a masters in my field, I am being paid what is considered low income for Hawaii. I would like to continue to work with special education students within the DOE, but when the BOE breaks pledges and makes decisions that are not in the best interest of teachers and the students they serve, many teachers are making the decision to leave the profession. I was able to decide to continue working in the DOE because of the pay differentials. Students deserve qualified teachers, and teachers deserve to not struggle financially when working a job they are qualified for.

Please know that your decisions greatly impact each and ever teacher and student. The decision go back on your word and cut shortage differentials will increase the teacher shortage and ensure that students are not being provided with effective qualified teachers.

Mahalo,
Katie Robinson
Third Grade Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

Stop

Amber <amber89nolan@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not short teachers of well deserved pay. It's hard enough to staff teachers in school, let alone get teachers into the profession and your thinking about cutting funds? We are educating the future leaders of the world and yet we are the most underpaid and under appreciated professionals in the world. How is this justified? We pay tens of thousands of dollars to get educated to educate others and yet we are the first to get pay cuts or furloughs. With our low pay rates we have a huge work load that tends to get bigger with no increase in pay, just more expectations. I am a young teacher trying to make in Hawaii, and it is the hard. I was born and raised in the island of Maui and I fear that one day I won't be able to live on my home island because of the cost of living compared to my pay grade. On top of that we are being forced to go back to work under unsafe conditions. Please reconsider and do not add fuel to the fire.

Amber Takatani

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Keita Jo <keita.jo@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:16 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Name: Keita Jo, Parent
Meeting: General Business Meeting (July 23, 2020)
Agenda Item: Temporary Discontinuance of Shortage Differentials
Position: Opposed

Honorable Catherine Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in opposition of the discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Special Education, HTS, HLIP for the 2020-2021 school year. While the pandemic has presented some of the most unforeseen financial challenges in our nation's history, these pale in comparison to the challenges that special education in Hawaii has endured over the course of the last few months and years.

Special education teachers have worked tirelessly to ensure educational continuity during these challenging times. The loss of the differential would be salt in the wound and a step in the wrong direction resulting in greater attrition and loss of qualified teachers for our keiki. We should not be making sacrifices on the backs of our most vulnerable population at a time when they need it most. Additional efforts are a must and we must not take ten steps back. Our special education program and the teachers that serve this important segment of our society deserve much better than this. As expressed by Superintendent Kishimoto in the past, CARES act funds have been identified for expenditure at the DOE in a effort to mitigate the financial costs associated with distance learning, including the supplanting of funds which would ordinarily come under the purview of the Department's typical funding cycle. Included within this funding are additional federal funds typically provided for Hawaii's SpEd enrollment.

We are capable of much more than what this agenda item represents to those whom are removed from SpEd and view this as low hanging financial fruit. We owe it to the more than 10% of children within the special education program and their teachers. We must learn from the mistakes of our recent past and need to look no further than the language in SB2488 (https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2020/bills/SB2488_HD1_.htm) which articulates the challenges Special Education in Hawai'i still faces in the aftermath of the Felix consent decree.

This is an easy decision.

Sincerely,

Keita Jo

Gmail

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

DO NOT TAKE AWAY DIFFERENTIALS

Autumn Cranwell <autumntucker@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:18 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

ALOHA, I AM AUTUMN CRANWELL, 1ST GRADE TEACHER ON Hawaii Island. I have been a teacher here in Hawaii for 15 YEARS. I have a Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education and a Masters Degree in Teacher Leadership. I am at THE FINAL Step 7 and cannot move any further to increase my pay. As my fellow new teachers come in, some are making as much as I am when I have spent my entire teaching career here giving and giving to Hawaii. I work every year at bettering myself for my students and my school regardless of moving up in pay. These differentials have helped and made me feel I am somewhat adequately paid here in Hawaii. I do not feel I should beg for this, but here I am asking for equity in pay. I know we are in a pandemic, but we are being asked to come back and work. We are already risking our lives and our family lives, and you want to take away our pay on top of this! I am outraged. We are teachers and we are people. We have feelings, we have families. Do not downplay or take things away from us when you are asking us to fix this pandemic. Do the right thing and keep our pay. If anything it should be more, but we are not asking that. We are just asking to stay where we are at. Not even asking to spare our lives.

Gmail

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

Differential pay

michelle heaviside <michellemybell3333@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a Special Education teacher at King Intermediate School. I am also a parent of an Autistic 10 year old. I feel that Special Eduction teachers should continue to receive more pay. I could barely survive on my pay before.
During 4th quarter last school year, I worked , while attempting to educate my child too. I provided instruction via packet, google classroom and held daily WebEx meetings. I also had to work to get my IEP case load complete before school ended. I have a google voice phone number and had parents and students calling with questions and needing help with instruction on the daily. I also had to keep precise records of all contact and instruction provided to parents and students and add to ecsss. I graded assignments, provided feedback, provided final
grades and so much more. It felt like I was always on call. I wanted my students and parents to feel safe, confident and for my students to have the opportunity to learn.
My Autistic/ADHD child (who also has a 1:1 during school) lost out on her education as I was working so hard!!! I found it very stressful to do both. This caused us both a lot of anxiety. She cannot work on her own and has meltdowns.
This year will be even harder!!!! I will have to come up With extra money to pay for my child to be in safe adult care who can help her on the days she does not go to school. I unfortunately do not have any family who would take care of her and work with her . If my pay is cut I may not be able to pay for care. Then what do I do? Quit teaching?
I do not know the solution but I do know that cutting our pay will affect so many teachers and students. I seriously do not know what will happen to me and my child if my pay is cut.
Sincerely,
Michelle Murphy
Special Eduction Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Differential pay for SPED Teachers

Frank Carbone <fcarbone@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,
This school year will be extremely challenging for all, and especially challenging for special education teachers. I have been a special education teacher here in Hawaii for over ten years. In the past special education teachers have continually seen increased demands, responsibilities, and caseloads with no extra time to get them done or compensation for our time. We end up staying well beyond contracted hours facilitating IEP's. We spend much time at home and on weekends preparing for IEP's and taking care of other sped related responsibilities. In the past it has been very discouraging and many sped teachers have felt overwhelmed and left the profession. When we received compensation in the form of the pay differential in January, sped teachers felt encouraged and appreciated for the first time. If this differential is taken away after only 6 months, it will be deviststing to teachers morale and place a financial burden and increased stress on us all. We count on the differential to make ends meet. I understand that revenue is down, but the state has a rainy day fund and other areas it can access. This is the time to use it. Other government workers are receiving raises at a time when it is being proposed to decrease our pay. If this happens you will be breaking the spirit of every special education teacher in the state of Hawaii. Please don't do that to us. We need to go into this new school year encouraged and not discouraged. If the differential is taken from us,you will see a mass exodus of special education teachers by the end of the school year. Please find a way to continue supporting us.
Thank you,
Frank Carbone

Gmail

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

Continue funding pay differential

Mark Alsbergas <alsbergas@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:22 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a certified special ed teacher. Even though I am eligible to retire, I am still paying the student debt which was incurred becoming a certified special ed teacher. Please continue to find the pay differential. It is sorely deserved and needed.

Get Outlook for Android

Gmail

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

Continue funding shortage differentials

Nālani Downing <nalani_downing@anuenue.org> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I urge the Board of Education to continue funding the recently implemented shortage differentials such as for the Hawaiian immersion teachers. The same reasons they were implemented in the first place continue to exist and are even more important.

With the Covid pandemic, many teachers are reconsidering their career given the difficult teaching situation. Many are considering retirement or changing careers. This tendency will only be further exacerbated if the shortage differentials are removed. The incentive to stay will be severely reduced and reconsidered.

Please continue to support these important programs for the keiki and our community.

Aloha,
Nalani Downing
--
This e-mail is being sent by a student or employee of Kula Kaiapuni ‘O Ānuenue.

Gmail

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

Proposed loss of differentials

Karol Wack <alohilani39@aol.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:27 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE Members,

Here we are again. It seems like every week, our pay is threatened. In addition to the overall stress and uncertainty of this pandemic and preparing for an unprecedented school year, I have to worry that I won't be able to support myself. Frankly, I feel as if teachers are being treated as if we are disposable and worthless.

I have spent this week rearranging my classroom so my students are as safe as possible upon returning to school. I have been educating myself on protocols and procedures. We technically do not return to school until the 29th, but I will be in my classroom prepping and training between now and then. I have not had a summer and that is okay because everything I do, I do for my students and school. That being said, a cut in pay will force me to consider a career change.

Please do not take away our differentials, we already face the possibility of furloughs. Please stand up and advocate for us. The expectations on educators are greater than ever. The loss of differentials will cause a hardship for myself and many others, especially if the governor follows through with furloughs.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my testimony.

Mahalo,

Karol Wack
Special Education Teacher K-2 FSC/Resource
Honoka'a Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kristi K <krisachi3@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:56 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Kristi Kakiuchi and I am a special education teacher at Kula Elementary. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I believe the extra compensation is important and very necessary as times are already tough for everyone-including teachers and that a temporary discontinuance may discourage some of our hard to staff teachers from returning this school year. This would be a huge loss to students as they would then need to be taught by substitute teachers or other non-highly qualified persons. Teachers are already facing extra challenges to COVID- they are risking their health in order to work with and help our Keiki. This extra compensation definitely has a big influence on some of our veteran teachers who could, and may likely choose to retire if it is taken away.

From my experience, I can tell you how difficult it is to provide special education services to students when there is a special education teacher shortage at a school. Students aren't serviced adequately or nearly as effectively as they could be. Teachers are stretched too thin. The extra compensation has helped me to buy materials I needed for my students-work books, supplies, snacks, and incentives. I was considering buying extra face shields this year on Amazon just in case a student refuses to wear a mask. I know the DOE says they will provide this, but I have my doubts as there are times our school doesn't have soap or paper towels for some of the bathrooms.

Please consider our schools- our new teachers that have just started and can learn so much from the more experienced teachers. Please consider that the extra compensation worked in increasing teachers moving into these hard to staff positions. Please consider the future of our students who deserve education from a highly qualified teacher.

Thank you,
Kristi Kakiuchi

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

testimony

Allison Tanaka <mrstanaka@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:29 PM
Reply-To: Allison Tanaka <mrstanaka@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

My name is Allison Tanaka. I am a Special Education Preschool Teacher at Lehua Elementary School in Leeward District on Oahu. I am one of nearly 4,000 teachers impacted by the proposal to temporarily discontinue the shortage differentials. The Special Education shortage differential was an incentive for me to remain at my school for school year 2020-2021. I even considered transferring to a hard to fill location because of my specialized training in Deaf Education. In short, the shortage differential works. It keeps highly qualified teachers in positions that are needed.

Retraction of the shortage differential will negatively impact me and my students when I choose to transfer to another position. My classroom services preschoolers who are deaf or hard of hearing in both Leeward and Central Districts. Although my class is relatively small compared to many other preschool classrooms, it is however, highly specialized.

The differential incentive worked.

- teachers transferring into special education positions increased by 29%
- teachers leaving special education positions decreased by 57%

Cutting the differential now will not solve the problem. Teachers who just transferred into special education positions and won't receive the promised differential, may not stay in those positions next school year. There may be a bigger mess to remedy next year.

Mahalo,
Allison Tanaka

Gmail

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

do not suspend funding of hard to fill teaching positions

Radiant Girl <radiantgirlretreat@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:30 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

On Dec. 5, Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. The BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages.

Also during the meeting, Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

This new proposal breaks that pledge. The HIDOE said the Legislature did not approve funding for the differentials as requested. It is now opting to suspend this compensation instead of looking at other areas of its operating budget, as originally promised.-HSTA

I urge you to continue funding for these important differentials.

My husband and I both live and teach in the community we were raised. Research shows that teachers who are from the community that they teach in are the most impactful on student learning. Positions in these schools are difficult to fill for a reason... it's tough. Teachers who are willing to put in the extra work to emotionally and mentally support students is incredibly taxing and we should be paid accordingly. We are dedicated educators, but with two teachers in the family we have to make huge financial sacrifices.

Unfortunately, a pay cut WILL force us to leave the state. I beg of you, please fund the differentials.

Aloha, Teagan Bruce, Leihoku Teacher Teacher.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Keani Mayer <wailuakaipuhaa@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Keani Mayer. I am a teacher at Kawaikini NCPCS on Kaua‘i. I just recently took the required course to become a “qualified” Hawaiian language teacher even though my degree was in Hawaiian studies with a focus on Hawaiian language and according to my bosses I was highly qualified to become the Hawaiian language teacher for the last two years. I took the course when I found out that these “qualified” teachers would be getting extra compensation because my salary as a teacher is already low and I could use the extra money. I see first hand how valuable it is to have teachers who are fluent in Hawaiian and how hard it is to find them, especially here on Kaua‘i. Many of the speakers are not licensed teachers, and many of the licensed teachers are not speakers. I think the extra compensation was a great way to help us out as teachers and also encourage speakers to become licensed teachers and licensed teachers to become “qualified” speakers. If we do not get this extra compensation I will have to find another job which will take away from my time and devotion to teaching or I will have to leave teaching all together. Please reconsider discontinuing this extra compensation.

Mahalo,
Keani Mayer

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cristy Hasha <chasha@voyagerpcs.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Cristy Hasha. I am a middle school special education teacher at Voyager Public Charter School. I was a Special Education teacher before the differential was put into place (I began my position the 2019/2020 school year) and I was thrilled when I found out about the SPED differential. With all the challenges we have been facing and are about to face as educators, it is more important than ever to continue this differential payment.

Our students with special needs are an at risk population; it is imperative that they receive quality education by qualified teachers. I am a 14 year veteran teacher who holds a master's degree in elementary education with a bachelor's degree in early childhood, elementary, and special education. I can provide the type of education these students need, but it is no secret that my workload increased dramatically when I undertook this teaching position last school year. With current openings available at my current school in general education, there is no incentive for me to remain in a position that will be increasingly difficult in the months to come.

Please do not penalize quality teachers at a time such as this. I implore you.

Signed,

Cristy Hasha

Gmail

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

Please fund differentials

Cindy Kochi <kochi.kc808@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 9:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To our Board of Education,
I am a teacher with 28 years of experience and currently a Special Education teacher. Three years ago prior to the differential, I CHOSE to move from being a curriculum coordinator to my high school's Special Education department chair DESPITE my colleagues questioning why I would do this. I saw a need to fill a key position left in limbo for two years due to a leave of absence with no one willing to take on because of its extreme challenges. I saw our veteran Special Education teachers FLOUNDERING trying to do their best to cover the load for all positions constantly filled with unqualified substitutes. My heart ached as I saw struggling students where the achievement gap was only growing larger and the apathy in their eyes and in their actions as they BELIEVED they could not learn.

After 3 years of being the department chair, I found myself CONSTANTLY trying to train and support emergency hires, long term substitutes, and day to day substitutes for special education positions that could not be filled. As I start my 4th year in this position, I must deal with the loss of one position due to budget cuts, two new Special Education teachers, and two teachers on leave due to stress/injury related to their job. The one highlight? One teacher will return from a general education position back to Special Education because of the differential.

The impact of not funding the differential? You WILL see more Special Education positions filled with UNQUALIFIED substitutes, more struggling high school students dropping out because they cannot get the support they need, and more cases of due process that will cost the state millions of dollars over many years.

Remember- our special students can be in school until the age of 22. Some of our teachers will work with a student for 4-8 years. In this time of the pandemic, we must offer, to the greatest extent possible, face to face education for our special education students. While general education teachers will be teaching via distance learning, our special education teachers must risk their health to service their students.

Please consider the differential as a small investment in supporting our most challenging students to become CONTRIBUTING members of society and economy. Please consider it preventative strategy from increasing due process cases and lawsuits. Please remember that our special education teachers WILL be providing face to face instruction even when the rest of our school will be online.

Thank you,
Cindy Asato-Kochi
King Kekaulike High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

ashley Thoma <ashleykthoma@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I am Ashley Thoma, a teacher at Konawaena High School, a mother of 3 children that attend Konawaena Elementary, and a wife of a 25-year-veteran SpEd/reg ed ELA (dual certified) teacher. This year my husband choose to go back to SpEd because he was promised the 10k differential. He would not have switched had it not been for this differential. We both were planning on the hard to staff differential. The potential loss of this promise is devastating to our family. We may have to consider other avenues of income and potentially leave the HIDOE.

Even more heartbreaking is how it affects our students. Our future lies in the hands, minds, and efforts of our children. They deserve an education that encourages them to grow and learn from an experienced teacher. I find my time as a "veteran teacher" (9 years as a teacher in HI) is spent on supporting new teachers in our department. Helping them navigate new experiences, classroom management, curriculum support, and time management. What makes this so disappointing every year is the time I am robbed that would otherwise be to focus on my own craft; developing my lessons, planning specialized instruction based on student data, researching best practices, and developing professionally. I am spread thin in all of my responsibilities. And when push comes to shove my students suffer.

I one day hope to see a school where the teachers in my dept can all have at least 3 years of experience. The direction and focus we could all have to better serve our keiki is one I saw bits of in my 6 years teaching (I was the newest teacher) at Kealakehe High. Our dept was able to collaborate on curriculum design, share planning and instruction ideas, and build our students experience that resulted in better test scores.

The fact that we cannot retain teachers has long term effects. This program to pay teachers more is the first that actually helped this catastrophic issue. Not to mention, the memo from June2020 had lifted our hopes in these dark times.

I am asking that all avenues are explored to fund this program. Our Keiki deserve only the best.

Aloha and mahalo for your consideration, Ashley Thoma

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kumi Alice iida <klida@haaspcs.net> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

To Whom It May Concern:
I am writing to testify against your proposal to discontinue extra compensation for teachers in hard to staff areas. As a High School English teacher in one of the poorest districts in Hawai'i, where teacher shortages are dire, implications of this would be devastating and disastrous. Furthermore, we are essential in keeping the community stable and growing, especially during such chaotic times.

I understand that Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Kumi Iida
HAAS Public Charter School
InDigital Program - High School
Teacher: English Language Arts
Direct Line: 808-965-3730 ext. 215
kiida@haaspcs.net

'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okāhi.
Not all knowledge is learned in the same school ~ Tutu Pukui

Gmail

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

Testimony

Glen Eastman <gdeastman@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Glen Eastman and I am a Special Education teacher at Pomaka'i Elementary School on Maui. I am testifying on Action Item G: Regarding the Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Please do not defer the teacher shortage differentials. With so many of our spouses working in hospitality a lot of our teachers are the only ones working right now too in this economy. My wife is furloughed and I am the only one working right now. A lot of my colleagues are in similar situations. She is going to lose medical care for her and our baby so I'm adding them to my insurance which is going to cut into even more of my take home pay. The server side job at the resort that I have has all but been eliminated. In these times every little bit of that differential helps Hawaii;s middle class families.

The confusing thing to me is why is this even being considered. The differentials clearly worked, look at the data. As a special education teacher, all I do is look at data to evaluate educational decisions and this clearly shows the shortages should continue. If I was in an IEP meeting, and the data showed a student was making progress towards a goal from a certain intervention, I would never discontinue that intervention without reaching the goal. That would never fly with the parents or admin, I would absolutely continue it or even increase it! This is exactly the same thing. Discontinuing the shortage differentials would be two steps back after one step forward. Cut the funds from somewhere else, we can't afford to have another Felix case on our hands. That would be devastating and inevitable if we don't continue to recruit and retain quality teachers for our keiki. Don't go back on your promise to fund the differentials with HIDOE monies, do what is right for our most vulnerable keiki.
Mahalo for your time,
Glen Eastman

Date: July 17, 2020

Dear Superintendent Christina Kishimoto,

Aloha, I hope this email finds you well. My name is Jalen Lee and I am currently a Special Education teacher with Nanaikapono Elementary in Nanakuli, HI. I am writing to you in regards to the board's action on the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year (Action Item G). This action has come to my attention via Hawaii State Teacher Association website that teachers who qualified for the differentials may possibly no longer receive these differentials. Hearing this almost immediately added an extreme amount of stress, worry, and discouragement to not only myself but also my Ohana.

I first started out as a long-term substitute teacher with Nanaikapono while I was finishing up my teaching degree back in 2015. Nanaikapono welcomed me with arms wide open and I immediately knew this was where I wanted to be. As time went on, I started to experience first hand many concerns as a teacher in the Nanakuli community. Many of the haumana experienced being house less, parents incarcerated, child neglect and abuse, and many families going through financial hardships to name a few. While facing all these various hardships, it made my Haumanas learning experience extremely difficult and in the end, made it challenging for myself to teach in a community like Nanakuli. After closely discussing the daily struggle with my own family, I knew this was exactly where I needed to be. Nanakuli deserved quality educators like any other community and I felt like I was a quality educator. But were we being compensated for our tireless work, no! As years went on, I slowly moved up in steps but like many other teachers, it wasn't enough to get by with the ever-growing Hawaii economy. But in January, we received the best news; we were finally being compensated for all our hard work. Like some, I qualified for the Hard-to-staff differential because I am an employee in a hard-to-fill school and also qualified for the Special Education differential. Now you can only imagine how much this enabled my family and I to remain in our home- Hawaii.

From the beginning, I understood that the differentials was not going to be easy to keep but with your positivity and encouraging words, I had no doubt in my mind that you were always going to fight for us. Additionally, I fully understand the struggle we are in as a state but please understand that we teachers are not in the greatest position. We are basically being forced to go back to work with minimal support on top of our differentials possibly being taken away? I for one, along with many of my colleagues are being stretched to our limits and have almost zero motivation to head back into the classrooms. Our differentials made a gigantic difference and allowed us to finally feel compensated for the countless amount of work that we do in and out of the classroom. But most importantly, this allowed me to stop agonizing about how we were going to make a life in Hawaii. My heart and soul belongs here in Hawaii with my ohana, and my heart belongs in the classrooms of Hawaii not elsewhere. If these differentials are taken away, my ohana will be forced to go back to thinking about leaving Hawaii and unfortunately, it will force me to think about leaving the teaching profession. We deserved those differentials- our ohanas deserved it even more. So, I respectfully ask you to re-consider stopping our differentials "temporarily".

Mahalo for your time,

Nanaikapono Special Education Teacher, 2015- Present
Jalen Lee

Gmail

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

Differentials for SpEd teachers

ALBERTINA Lindsey <alkapons_alby@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing in response to the Hawai'i State Board of Education (BOE) aiming to defer shortage differentials in which, the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) began in January for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools. To conclude that this is a consideration because it has been "challenging during Covid-19" is an understatement.

I am a special education teacher and I am completely livid that this would even be a discussion. During school closures and working "remotely" it was challenging for me... for my department... for all special education teachers in general. Not only did we have to teach "remotely" to our special populations, but we also had to collect data, work "remotely" for each student (individualized work, individualized virtual sessions, progress monitoring, progress reports, meeting weekly with parents), complete a mandated documentation sheet for each student, etc...

Our general education teachers, yes, provided instruction as well for our general education students but they didn't have the extras of documenting, providing grades, teaching to each individual student needs and so forth...

When we start our school year, it will be even more challenging because not only do we have to do all the above, but we will now be teaching "in-person" as well as distance learning (for our students that chose to work "remotely"); We will have to hold IEP meetings for ALL our students as well. In addition, we are putting our lives at risk and our families. The safety and health for us, special education teachers, are at a definitely higher risk. We work with behavior students who kick, spit, shove, pull hair, and yell at us on a daily.

Please re-consider taking away from our differentials. This is not right. I don't understand how you can do this to us. This is so sad. And it's in our superintendent's plan to retain teachers? She put together an induction and mentoring program to retain teachers? How is this retaining any teachers? If anything, this is driving our teachers away. At my current school, 4 teachers of 22 left... 4! One teacher retired early and the others resigned. It's literally a slap in our faces. Please do what's right and we'll deserved.

Sent from my iPhone

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

Testimony for pay differentials

Adonna Bishitashon <adonna.bishitashon@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

There are a lot of mixed emotions teachers are feeling right now, disheartened, angry, disappointed, and betrayed. Being a sped teacher, I understand why people are leaving the profession. I was an unqualified sped teacher (Emergency hire), who finally after two years of teaching and underpaid, I'm finally certified. I worked just as hard as the other sped teachers, but there were times I felt helpless and lost because I knew my kids needed a qualified special education teacher and I wasn't one. According to the data that was provided the pay differentials are working. Sped teachers have finally comeback to the profession. Teachers are transferring to hard to staff schools. We are already paid so low, it's not about the money for me because I get to do what I love, but unfortunately I have to survive in this world. My husband and I are both teachers who work and live in Lahaina. However, we are struggling as it is, but we love what we do. And in the end we are here for our kids, and our keiki's deserve the best. I do not want to be like the other dozens of teachers who leave every year because they cannot continue to afford to live here. I urge the board to deny the request of temporarily discontinuing the pay differential. If you were a teacher once please, put yourselves in our shoes.

Mahalo,

Adonna Bishitashon Ellard

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

Testimony

Stephanie Yokoyama <stephanie.yokoyama@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whomever This May Concern,
My name is Stephanie Yokoyama, and I am a special education teacher at Kahakai Elementary. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am from the town of Kailua-Kona on the Big Island, and all of the public schools in my town are considered hard-to-staff locations. Growing up in Kona led me to seeing many teachers come and go due to the high living costs associated with living in Kona. It has always been my intention from when I began my journey in education to return to Kona as a special education teacher, but the costs of living in Kona made me feel hesitant to return home and serve my community. However, my decision to return home was solidified by knowing that special education teachers serving in Kona would be able to receive the differentials that would reduce the financial burden I will experience as a first year teacher.

Also, the lack of qualified personnel provides challenges for Kona teachers that confirms the decision for many to leave our town and essentially leaves Kona with one less qualified educator. In Kona, it is very common for Teach for America candidates to fill special education positions because there are not enough qualified educators who want to teach in Kona. Due to the costs of living in Kona, the few qualified special education teachers we do have sometimes decide to leave our community, preventing our children with special needs from having continuity in their educational lives and thus negatively affecting their learning and development.

Discontinuing the differential for special education teachers and teachers in hard-to-staff locations will not only discourage qualified educators from wanting to work in towns like Kona, but it will also hurt our children because they will be unable to receive the education from qualified professionals that they deserve.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

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Continue funding for special education

Claudette Humphrey <chumphrey1@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please continue to support our Special Education teachers at this serious time of dilemma! Claudette Humphrey Special Education Teacher
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

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

Testimony- Oppose

Cari Yamafuji <cari.yamafuji@k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cari Yamafuji, Special Education Teacher
Lincoln Elementary
All Day Resource K-5
Oppose discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion programs for the 2020-21 school year.

*The work of a special education teacher is incredibly difficult. The result of the pressures placed on teachers is that the students suffer.
*A special education teacher's classes have students with various disabilities. Each student is a unique case, thus the teacher must modify their lessons to meet the objectives of every individualized education program.
*Special Education teachers already feel the budget cuts in that there are fewer teacher assistants available, which results in a greater workload for special education teachers. We face shortages of essential resources and equipment for delivering effective lessons.
*Special education teachers often find themselves being required to go to meetings, conducting assessments and dealing with loads of paperwork.
*Special Education teachers work with the students that need more than a General Education Teacher can provide. They may have learning disabilities, emotional problems, anger control issues, illnesses, cognitive impairments.
We teach those who need more!
We teach children that others can not!
We teach children so they can go back into the general education classroom!
We teach children basic life skills!
We teach and support the families when their child needs more!!!

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Testimony

Cindy Tamashiro <cctamashiro@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing this to testify on Action G on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in hard to staff positions. I ask for your support of providing pay differentials for shortage areas for school year 2020-2021. An agreement with the Board of Education was reached to help alleviate teacher shortages in hard to staff positions. Dr. Kishimoto and the Board of Education pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers could not fund the differentials. I know that times are challenging now, but please honor this pledge and look for sources to fund the differentials.

I agreed to return to a Special Education position after being in general education for the past 32 years. The pay differential was a big factor in my decision to return to special education. I am near the end of my teaching career and felt that I would come full circle and return to special education in my last few years. I am counting on the extra pay differential to make up for the extra time and training that I will need to go through because I have been out of special education for over 30 years. Without the differential, I would definitely not have returned to special education.

In my efforts to prepare for my new special education position this coming school year, I agreed to teach ESY (Extended School Year) this summer. It was a challenging summer as we had to deal with following safety protocol in the classroom as well as me having to spend a lot of hours reviewing each student's IEP and preparing lessons to meet their individual learning goals. I spent a lot of unpaid hours planning and preparing lessons for my students and this was only for the summer. When our regular school year begins, I know that I will be spending many more unpaid hours in planning, prepping, attending meetings, writing IEPs, setting up my classroom to follow social distancing, following safety protocols, and doing many other tasks. Excluding the Covid related tasks, the other reasons are why I left special education 32 years ago. The differential will greatly help to make up for all the extra time and effort that the new year will bring.

I ask that you please consider my request. I have been seriously considering retiring if the differentials are not funded. I will have to make a difficult decision in the next few weeks as to whether I will continue to teach without the pay differential or retire as soon as possible. I still love teaching and helping my students learn. I will definitely feel a loss if I retire, but I need to look out for what makes sense for me financially.

Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Tamashiro
Kapunahala Elementary School
Special Education Resource Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

malia lee <malialee72@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:
I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**
My name is MaliaLee Akutagawa and this will be my 16th teaching at Molokai High School. 13 years as a science teacher and the past 3 as the tech coordinator, Audio/Visual Manager, and HSA Coordinator.
I have been receiving a differential in a hard-to-staff school, Molokai High School. Our cost of living is a bit higher than our Oahu counterparts and our resources are limited. I usually take my children to Oahu before school starts and I am grateful I had some extra money to book our flights, hotel, and car to get them much needed clothes, school supplies, and other personal items needed for the new school year.
Student WSF does not give us enough money for classroom supplies and sometimes buying certain science items cannot be found on our island.
Please reconsider and don't go back on your promise.
Mahalo
MaliaLee Akutagawa

Gmail

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

Differential

Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:45 PM
Reply-To: Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I teach in a small rural school on the Big Island of Hawaii. It is a great school, but most students are underserved and struggle to keep up because of the geographical situation, the remoteness as well as the economic, social, technical and language barriers they fight daily. Many of the teachers travel 50 to 150 miles daily to serve and work with these students to have better life and quality education. Our resources and materials are minimal or outdated compared to other schools and opportunities for them cost much as we have to bus or fly. The differential barely helps cover the gas, money out of our own pockets for food and resources and time we spend extra each day for our students to succeed. We also have a lot of ELL and high end need students the require the special attention.Please do not take away the differentials. It is difficult enough the the stress of the uncertainty of the virus as well as retaining and recruiting teachers to help us is tough. Please vote no to cut our pay...please..
Sincerely,
Dr. Angie Miyashiro

Testimony

Carolyn Bryant <carolynbryant510@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 10:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Carolyn Bryant and I am a special education teacher at Mililani Uka Elementary and I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
Currently Hawaii still has such a teacher shortage and if this action is voted through it will continue to affect the classrooms in the state. There are already too many classrooms across the state that will have non-certified teachers.
Also due to the increased concern from COVID-19, if this differential pay is not given then more teachers may choose to retire or leave the profession for better pay. The most vulnerable children need experienced teachers in their classroom during this difficult time.
Please continue to make students and teachers in Hawaii a top priority.

Thank you,
Carolyn Bryant

Gmail

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

Testimony

Seppelfrick Diana <dseppelfrick@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 11:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**

Please reject the Proposal. I am currently receiving a differential, and this has helped me remain in my position. This has helped immensely with my cost of living expenses. I am able to spend extra hours after school working with students who need extra help. As a club Advisor, the differentials also help offset my time and energy with extracurricular club activities for my students. If the differentials are retracted this will negatively impact my students learning.

Sincerely,
Diana Seppelfrick
Teacher 33 years
Waianae High School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Brittany Ferreira <byf818@hawaii.edu> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 11:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Brittany Ferreira and I am a 4-5th SPED Resource + inclusion teacher at Kaahumanu Elementary. I got my degree in both General Education and Special Education this past May of 2020. I chose to accept a job as a SPED teacher although I knew the workload would be intense because I knew working with students of special needs is where my heart lies. With the pandemic happening, us as Special Education teachers must help our students everyday, all day when school starts again. We will NOT be on a blended schedule, and will be risking our lives and health BECAUSE our students of special needs are our priority. Please reconsider rejecting this proposal as SPED teachers need this differential to get by. Our jobs are not easy, ask any SPED teacher, we work with students of all behaviors and come home to wash off the stress we went through each and every day. We prepare countless IEP meetings and stay past work hours just because our students mean that much to us. We spend hours and hours planning individual lessons per student as our students have a variety of learning needs and are never on the same level. And now, with the regression our students faced throughout this pandemic, we will be working above and beyond just to make sure our students are reaching their IEP goals. I urge you to reject this proposal and show to all of us that special education teachers DO matter. I don't want to regret my decision of going into this field because of the lack of support SPED teachers receive.

Thank you.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ronson Sahut <ronsonkealii@hotmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 11:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE Members!

My name is Ronson Sahut and I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for 2020-2021 school year.

I am currently teaching at Elsie H. Wilcox elementary school on Kauai. I am licensed to teach both general education and special education but I have been a general education teacher for the last 13 years. Because of the extra compensation, I will be filling special education position. I would not have done so otherwise. With the extra compensation I am able to work one job and support my family. Without the compensation I cannot afford to support my family.

Please reconsider the discontinuance of compensation. Thank you!

Ronson Sahut

Gmail

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

Special Education Teacher

Adam Larson <AdamJLarson@live.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 11:14 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello!

I am a special education teacher starting my 2nd year in Hawaii schools. I previously was a special education teacher for 5 years in Seattle Public Schools. I took a tremendous paycut to come here, mostly due to Hawaii DOE's decision to not count my credits and PD done while in Seattle schools. I was planning on moving to general education this school year or possibly moving away from the islands entirely, However, the pay differential for special education and hard to staff areas stopped me. It allowed me to afford staying here. With schools on the mainland not starting until September I have plenty of time to procure a job there if you make the decision to cut my pay drastically. I know I am not the only one in this position. Do the right thing and continue the differential pay...Hawaii is already SO far beyond other states in terms of teacher pay and this should be embarrassing.

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

Testimony

Rockwell Bounos <bounosr@knights.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 11:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Rock and I'm an FSC high school teacher at James B. Castle High School. I will be starting my sixth year at Castle this August. Until recently, I held a second job as a Pizza Hut delivery driver. I needed the money to help keep my family afloat, as working with the DOE doesn't pay enough. When the shortage differential for sped teachers kicked in, I felt a deep relief. I could sleep better knowing that extra few hundred bucks a month would help me pick up the necessities, pay my landlord, keep food on the table, and the lights on. With the differential pay, my wife could afford to find a job closer to home that paid less but left us both with an improved quality of life since we could see more of each other.

Please, do not vote to take away this pay differential for sped teachers, hard to staff school teachers, and Hawaiian immersion teachers. Working in special education is difficult enough as it is, pouring in more hours and being responsible for our students much longer than our peers. There have been more times than I can remember having to wait with my special needs students till 4pm on campus for their Handi-van or school bus pick up because we already can't fund the additional 1:1 support we need for our kids and our kids get extended day school services because of their disabilities.

If this differential is severed, both teacher's quality of life and the energy we devote to our students declines and that will not benefit anyone in the short or long term.

Mahalo,

Rockwell Bounos
Special Education Teacher and IEP coordinator
James B. Castle High School
808-305-0895

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shay Zykova <s.zykova@seariders.k12.hi.us> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 6:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing in to testify on account of Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion for the 2020-2021 school year.

As a SPED teacher at Waianae High School, this compensation is essential to keeping teachers in schools as well as in notoriously difficult positions like Special Education.

For one, this pandemic has revealed the inequality present in our schooling and removing further incentives for teachers to remain educators would doubtlessly drive more away. The Leeward Coast deserves competent and driven educators, who should be fairly compensated for their work. Without these incentives I fear that staff turnover will likely rise, compromising the education of our most needy students. The fact that the Board is clearly not putting their education at the forefront is appalling. Our kids should not be the first to suffer due to economic pressures. It is downright unethical.

The same goes for hard-to-fill positions In Special Education. SPED teachers are legally required to take on additional paperwork, data tracking, etc. all for no extra pay. As a result, there is unsurprisingly a shortage in this area. After promising the bonus, this was the first time I've seen people actually vie for those positions. It's not that people don't want to teach SPED students, it's just that for the same pay As a Gen-Ed teacher they wouldn't have the additional work that SPED teachers do. Who would want more work with no extra pay?

Again, this also compromises the educational quality that our SPED students receive. Our most vulnerable students should not be the first ones on the chopping block. There is a reason that these positions were singled out as needing an incentive and taking it away just prior to the start of the school year is completely disingenuous.

If this organization is not worth it's word than don't be surprised as the teaching profession in Hawai'i continues to erode, losing valuable professionals to the mainland. Why would anyone trust the longevity of any promise made if it can so easily be taken away?

Were these differentials be removed, personally, I'd be hard pressed to continue teaching at my school due to the pressures of my workload, commute, and strained resources that are common in a high needs area like mine. I wouldn't be surprised if many, many other teachers do the same.

We love this work, but we are also professionals who deserve to be paid fairly. I urge the Board to consider the long term impacts on both teachers and students before making this decision. The impacts of COVID shouldn't fall so heavily on the shoulders of those who at this time need the most support.

Sincerely,
Shay Zykova

--
Mahalo,

Shay K. Zykova
ELA Teacher
Wai'anae High School
ph: (808) 307-8360
fax: (808) 697-9560

Testimony (7/23/2020)

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 11:57 PM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

17 July 2020

Members of Hawaii State Board of Education

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Keith Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 24 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending Hawaii public school.

My name is Patricia Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 29 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending Hawaii public school.

We are both in what is considered an "at-risk category". Regardless of safety measures in place, there is still no guarantee of complete protection. We care for two elderly parents in our home, and one parent who lives elsewhere. We do NOT want to transmit anything to them since they are in a "high-risk category".

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html

We are writing because we are deeply concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on 4 August. The current state plan not only does not ensure the safe return of our students to school, but indeed it actively jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. The measures announced by Hawaii DOE do not meet CDC recommendations, and do not adequately consider the risks to our community or the consequences that are likely to result if the state proceeds with the current plan. It is unacceptable.

There is mounting scientific evidence that COVID-19 is mainly transmitted when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even simply just breathes or talks. The conditions that facilitate viral transmission are closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces in which individuals are not wearing masks. (Thus it is not merely a matter of maintaining adequate physical distance.) Many of our classrooms exhibit precisely these qualities that we know, scientifically, to be unsafe. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the current DOE plan does not sufficiently address the fact that reopening our schools under the current plan will create exactly the conditions that are most conducive to transmitting the virus. It is a recipe for a public health disaster.

While it is encouraging the state and HSTA reached an agreement to maintain six-foot distance between students in the classroom, this is far from adequate to even minimally protect the health and safety of our community. Among the most serious inadequacies in the current reopening plan are:

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for "universal masking"[1]. Especially in

closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.

2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules. The Board of Education's Chapter 19 states the disciplinary rules and consequences for students. If mask wearing and social distancing were to be included, teachers would have reason for mandating masks.
4. It is likely that some teachers, foolishly, do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe untrue things, but as responsible public employees they do not have any right whatsoever to inflict that false belief upon others in their care. As an analogy, some teachers may not believe in vaccines, but we do not allow their opinion to change our vaccination requirements. Policy should be based on science, and on life-or-death matters of public health, certain things – like vaccinations, masks, and social distancing – mandatory, with no exceptions.
5. Taken together, the current state plan is a recipe for a public health disaster, and puts the lives of students, parents, and teachers at great risk. It is completely unacceptable. Under the current state plan ***there is no possibility*** that [a] we will be sending our child to in-person classes and [b] feel comfortable teaching under the proposed classroom rules and conditions.

Therefore, we are calling on you and all other officials to announce and implement the following measures:

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools (not "virtual learning" where students learn from a program);
2. Delaying the opening of schools until at least 4 weeks have passed with no COVID cases in our state (as was mentioned months ago), or at least until after Labor Day if/when community spread has decreased dramatically;
3. A statewide mandate to require the use of masks at all times when on public school premises (with reasonable exceptions only in the case of teachers and administrators who are alone in their classrooms and offices);
4. Better support and options (besides just sick leave and ADA compliance, the latter which is a lengthy and not-guaranteed process) for teachers who are not only at extremely high-risk, but just at-risk as well;
5. More thorough, extensive, and in-depth training (not only during the first few days of teacher work days in late July, but perhaps the entire month of August) for distance learning; and
6. Allowing no exceptions to the six-foot distancing rule.

We appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of COVID-19 in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die

or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. We, as teachers, are disheartened to hear us as being "a test case" for the rest of the nation. Yes, children may not get sick or critically ill, but they can be asymptomatic carriers that infect adults (especially at-risk adults) on campus. And then those educators' families will be put at risk too, especially if they care for kupuna (like we do). We have to care for **ALL** people, not just a select few. Government is "for *the people*."

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns we have expressed.

Best regards,
Keith and Patricia Ishihara
Pearl City

[1] Time for Universal Masking and Prevention of Transmission of SARS-CoV-2

Time for Universal Masking and Prevention of Transmission of SARS-CoV-2

In this issue of JAMA, Wang et al present evidence that universal masking of health care workers (HCWs) and pati...

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jennifer Jo <jennifermelindajo@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:06 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Honorable Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I have been a Special Education teacher for 2 years at Chiefess Kapiolani Elementary School in Hilo. Teaching Special Education has been my passion, and I recently became licensed in Special Education. When the shortage differential took effect I felt inspired to work even harder for my students, because I felt that the DOE valued my contribution to my school community.

During the COVID-19 school closures, I provided my personal cell phone number to my students families because many students with disabilities have difficulty learning even in small groups and need more support. I worked many nights taking time from my own children to provide support for my students. My own children had to complete their distance learning assignments independently because I was too busy meeting the needs of my students, and the ever changing guidance from the DOE. As a Special Education teacher, we had so many layers to complete to ensure we were in compliance with all of the rules and regulations required of us even during school closures.

I worked tirelessly to ensure that my students were given the services they needed and beyond, and this is the thanks I get?

When the updated Shortage Differential guidelines came out in June, I felt a sense of relief that I was still getting my shortage differential through the CARES funding because the DOE had emphasized the importance of these shortage differentials.

Now as I reflect on all of the hard work and extra time I put in on a regular basis as a Special Education teacher, and how myself and my colleagues work is being discarded, I feel so disappointed in how little we are valued in a 2 billion dollar budget.

I really hope that the Board of Education can right the wrong that Superintendent Kishimoto is suggesting. Our Keiki, especially those with the highest needs, should and deserve to have the most qualified and dedicated teachers providing them with quality education.

Thank you,

Jennifer Jo

Please include your name, and your school or workplace if you're an educator, or school that your children attend.

Testimony

Kahanu Nguyen <kahanunguyen@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kahanu Nguyen. I am a 1st grade, dual-certified teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hawaii District on the Island of Hawaii. I have taught for 14 years here in Hawaii. I am submitting testimony for Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I implore you to please continue to fund for teacher shortage differentials. As you know, cuts would devastate our already critical teacher shortage and will personally harm my family and the students with special needs I serve as well. More students would go without licensed teachers because pay cuts would drive those qualified teachers into early retirement and/or out of the profession. Students would be left with long-term subs and unqualified teachers if new and existing educators leave the profession. It would also make moving a necessary consideration if we can't afford Hawai'i's high cost of living on a reduced salary, even at the risk of our own health!

Thank you for fighting to ensure that the coronavirus crisis does not result in lasting damage to Hawaii's public education and our keiki. I passionately ask you to partner with Hawai'i's educators for our future using promised funding that will benefit us all. Thank you for your support and in truly putting our keiki first!

Mahalo,

Kahanu Nguyen, Hawaii District, Island of Hawaii

Differentials

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:52 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE, do I need to say it? There is a teacher shortage right now. Right before Coronavirus it was time for us to true up our salaries from when we were furloughed in the Lingle administration. We have already lost that. Now, we are asked to be frontline workers, at risk of dying each and every day. Now you/they want us to become miracle workers, somehow teaching distance-learning while we deliver in class instruction at the same time??? Much pressure is put on teachers and principals to hurriedly open schools without clear directives, proper PPE, any distance learning training AT ALL (despite what Kishimoto said)—-and we have to deal with parents that decide that they do or do not like our mask policy! How are we rewarded? We are provided with no childcare for our own children, while we watch the kids in the community around us! In addition, you/they?? want to nix our differentials for being in hard to staff schools???? Talk of paycuts and getting rid of our differentials when we should be truing up our salaries that we already lost due to the pandemic ????!!!! Are you kidding me???, This will not look good to the parents or the news media and many teachers will absolutely quit and you/they will have a hard time recruiting teachers from the mainland by showing them how they can get all their homework done on the beach! We put ourselves at risk every day and we work so hard because we love the children of our communities—-but we feel like we are being totally taken advantage of and kicked around and bullied! It needs to stop!
Sick without Covid, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Hana Mauldin <hanamauldin@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Hana Mauldin and I am a kindergarten teacher at Mountain View Elementary on Hawaii island.

I was upset when I read that the board is going to ask for a "temporary discontinuance" of our differentials. I understand that our economy is suffering. Please consider that we are returning to work during a pandemic when cases are rising and we have also heard from Governor Ige that state workers may face a paycut up to 20%. The differentials were a promise that you made to help the teachers in our state and to recruit teachers from elsewhere. It has been proven to help keep teachers. It was also a way to help compensate SPED teachers for their time. SPED teachers will have so much work to do this year and pausing their deferential is a slap in the face to them.

I have already spent money on PPE for the upcoming school. My financial planning has been based on a salary that included receiving this differential.

Sacrifices are already being made for our students. Please don't make us sacrifice our pay as well.

Thank you for your time,
Hana Mauldin

Gmail

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

The discontinuance of hard to staff and special education differentials.

Kathryn Whitman <kathryn@kalo.org> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not discontinue differentials for hard to staff and SPED positions! We cannot afford to lose qualified teachers- especially at such a crucial time as this!

These differentials may be the only thing keeping quality veteran teachers from retiring and others from moving out of state for more lucrative jobs, myself included. Please oppose agenda item G and do whatever you can to keep these differentials in place.

Mahalo nui,

Kathryn Whitman
Elementary SPED teacher
Kanu o Ka ‘Aina NCPCS

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

reject the proposal to defer millions of dollars in shortage differentials

thai touch <thaitouch.ak@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to ask that you reject the proposal to defer millions of dollars in shortage differentials.

This is exactly the opposite of what we need to be doing to support our teachers. Teachers should actually be getting a raise for being on the frontlines, along with health care workers. In opening schools we are putting ourselves and families at risk.

Rather, BOEs nationwide need to ban together and demand of the federal government additional funding for increasing salaries, not decreasing salaries. In addition, we need to demand funding for protective equipment for schools. Schools need to be better funded, now more than ever.

Melody
Melody Hall
www.mixedtraditions.com
808-308-3265 (Cell)
808-892-4169 (Home)

"The soul has been given its own ears to hear things the mind does not understand." Rumi

Gmail

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

Differential Pay

Louis Lujan <lframirez08@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 5:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Please commit to the plan that had already been confirmed via PAFs and documentation. Four thousand special education educators received that PAF stating they would receive a differential.

If you remove that under the rug, could you imagine what would happen to employee morale especially when all special education teachers come in very close contact to their students. I don't see myself staying past the 20-21 year if you move forward with this and I'm sure I'm not the only one.

I understand people are struggling to make ends meet even with $600 extra every week for the past four months, but us Special education educators have been bending over backwards ensuring that no child is left behind.

Mahalo

Gmail

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

Testimony

Nicole Ilae <nikiilae@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:01 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom it May Concern:

I am testifying on Action Item G: Temp. Discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers...

I work at Olomana School. I have been a teacher for 18 years. I have been thinking about leaving the profession for the last 3 years. When I got extra compensation back in January of 2020, I felt like I could survive in my current profession. I am a single parent and would not be able to live in Hawaii on "just' my teacher salary. **The extra compensation HELPED A LOT. Please do not take it away. I beg you.**

Thank you for your time.

Nicole Ilae

Gmail

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

Temporary Discontinuance of Extras Compensation

Saundra Stallworth <saundra.stallworth@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:11 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,
I am a Special Education teacher who has taught at King Kamehameha III Elementary school on Maui since Winter 2014. I came to Maui as a special education teacher as a Columbus teacher in 2000 as a single parent and after Columbus education I was one of a few that remained and became part of the Hawaii DOE. It has always been an uphill battle to survive as a teacher in Hawaii and I am witnessing a continuation of stellar teachers leaving the islands because of the frustration of trying to survive. There are those who have remained on island but left the teaching professions. At this time, many of us who had second jobs to help make ends meet; no longer have these jobs because of the pandemic. If I knew this earlier in the year, and with the threat of a furlough , I would have considered the job possibilities in another state with less struggle to survive. It is decisions like this that effects the moral of those of the teaching profession. Austerity measures will not make it easier for the economy to recovery but make it more complicated.

Saundra Stallworth
Special Education Teacher, Maui

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

Continue funding for teacher shortage differentials

Mary CHRISTINE Nguyen <christinemarynguyen@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This email is in regards to the Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Please do not unfund this. It is critical to fund this as these teachers need this, our communities need this. This is a critical time for everyone. Teachers are working their hardest, now more then ever and teachers should not be receiving a pay cut and/or funding should not be cut for anything that involves education or teachers. If anything teachers and our educators should be receiving hazard pay and/or additional Compensation for all they are required to do. These are unprecedented times and teachers have had to do more with less (just like everyone else that has been affected during this pandemic). Their requirements to teach has drastically changed. In a matter of weeks they had to revamp and change how they teach, where they teach. They have sacrificed so much in so little time.

There is a reason there is Extra Compensation for hard to staff geographical locations, because it is hard to staff. Many times teachers need to travel far distances to teach there. There is a reason Special Education teachers get extra compensation to teach special needs children, because it challenging to teach them. Please consider other options and secure federal funding to make up for any budget shortfalls before going down this route.

Cutting the extra compensation does not send a clear message that we appreciate everything these teachers do. Our teachers shape the future for our children and this is not the way to show our appreciation. Teachers are critical to our community. This action is disgraceful and will have an adverse affect on our community, more importantly on our children. Cutting funding will cause a domino effect. Teachers will suffer, children will suffer, hence our community will suffer.

Having lived and attended school in Ka'u, I know firsthand teachers have traveled from Hilo and beyond to come out to teach us. They sacrificed an hour or so every day (one way) to come out to teach us. These teachers deserve this. They don't deserve to have their extra compensation taken away. Taking this extra compensation away risks having teachers WANT to travel far and wide to teach there.

Please consider the ramifications of cutting this expense. We need to work on ways to improve our heartfelt appreciation to our teachers and educators, not the opposite.

Warmest Aloha,

Mary Christine nguyen
Christinemarynguyen@hotmail.com
808 937 0532

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Continue Teacher Shortage Differentials

Summer Hughes <summerpila@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

During this unprecedented time, it is more important than ever to keep the understaffed, special education, and Hawaiian immersion positions filled. Many teachers are contemplating leaving during this time of COVID and this would seal the deal.
I myself am a special education teacher and am now faced with increased work due to following up with each of student with an IEP to determine compensatory services. I am faced with inevitably being more exposed to the risk of COVID due to the nature of my title, special education preschool teacher. We deal with all manner of bodily fluids and assist with toileting. ALL special education teachers are more at risk due to the population we teach. I am NOW faced with having to find and pay for childcare for my children THREE days a week while I continue to teach the children of my community. This cut in pay would ultimately make my decision to take a leave and stay home to teach my children from home, therefore leaving one more open position in a hard to staff school. Please reconsider your position of cutting differentials and think of the long term impacts on the keiki of Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Summer Pila

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Pay

Laura Ezaki <laura.ezaki@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Laura Ezaki and I am a sped teacher at Ewa Makai. Before I had my pay increase, I was taking care of my elderly mother. She lives with me and has dementia and diabetes. She didn't qualify for medicare because she was over by a mere $200.00 in her retirement. I needed to borrow money from friends to help put food on the table. I live with my husband who works part time who is also retired from his job. With the paid increase, I was able to take care of my mom without the worry of borrowing from my friends which is so humiliating.

I urge you to reconsider taking away our increase of pay.

Mahalo,
Laura Ezaki

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

testimony

Shari Inter <shari.inter@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Iam testifying on action item G Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Shari Inter. I work at Kapunahala elementary school. I am a dual certified teacher. I have been a general education teacher for the past 10 years and decided to go back into special education when the differential was announced. Hawaii has a very high cost of living and teacher pay is not much. I want to live and work in Hawaii and raise my children here but, that will be very difficult if the cost to live in Hawaii continues to rise. Teachers have been short changed raises for years. I need to support my family of 5. Please support the differential pay to help keep our teachers.

Thank you,
Shari Inter
Kapunahala Elementary

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

Shortage differentials NEEDED & schools not ready to open

April Manding <aprilmanding@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is April Joy M Apana. I am a registered voter, a mother of 2, and a public school 2nd grade teacher. I find it appalling that we are even thinking of taking away the shortage differential. The differential will help my special needs students get the extra support they need.

Second, as a mother and a teacher, schools are NOT READY to reopen. The cases are too high, teachers are not ready, and the admin needs more time to train teachers and custodians on new Covid-19. Please consider pushing back the start date, even three weeks. We do NOT need to be the nations guinea pigs.

Sincerely,
April Apan

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

testimony

John Kapele <coachkapele@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:02 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is John Kapele I teach at Kailua Intermediate I've been a special education teacher for 29 years with a lot of experience teaching the students that I loved. I enjoy teaching and seeing the success of my students year in and year out. Because I'm a veteran teacher the many years of Compression pay took its toll on my life financially and an even though I love the teaching profession I was contemplating leaving the DOE for another Job to make ends meet. When I herd on December 5 2019 that I would be compensated for the hard work I've done for 29 years I got rejuvenated like life was pumped into me. and I was motivated to stay on and continual the profession that I enjoyed to do. When Covid-19 hit and I had to change to distance learning I took on the changes and the challenges that would require me to do to help my students learn. It was a difficult time. Im looking forward to the upcoming school year and its going to be hard and different. But I was up to it. Then I herd that my special education pay was going to be taken away from me. My feelings just went back to wanting to retire again and the feeling that the hard work that we all do is not appreciated. I understands Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. “Even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. If Hawaii’s teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. so please find a another way.

Gmail

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

Differentials and compression pay.

Perry Buchalter <psbuchalter@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,
Please know that during the OCVID-19 shelter-in-place, we teachers were working extra hours to assure our students had the distance learning curriculum they needed. We did this with no more warning than any other organization and we did it because it is what our profession requires. Just before the pandemic hit, the BOE and DOE recognized and reached an agreement on those of us teachers who had been stuck in step movements due to the last economic catastrophe. We had been stuck without proper compensation for over ten years and even though an agreement had been reached recognizing the tremendous neglect weighed upon us, we are once again denied this retribution in pay. Along with this, the DOE and BOE also agreed to extra pay for Special Needs teachers and those of us who work in hard to staff areas. This is the first summer in years that I have not traveled and have given up much of my own time attending virtual meetings focusing on upcoming changes in classroom and distance learning needs.

The bonuses for hard to staff positions help cover the higher cost of living in these areas. The bonus for special needs teachers helps cover the extra hours working on IEP's and conducting meetings. These are both important recognitions, but not as important as the compression pay as those of us stuck at step 11 for over ten years have been denied our recognition in pay for years of service and yet, just before receiving this long-overdue neglect in pay we are asked not only to give it up again but to also take a greater pay cut; despite the fact that we will be working longer hours and taking on extra tasks during this pandemic. The compression pay NEEDS to be funded, as do the other recognized bonuses approved.

Teachers are essential workers and our time is coming soon to make sure our students' needs are meant either virtually or by putting our own lives on the line by entering a classroom knowing full well there is no antidote yet. The Federal Government has provided relief funds that we hope are being used for essentials, and hopefully to fund education as well.

I understand the shortfall the State will be facing, this is a good time to look at diversification of our own resources and not be a State so solely dependant on tourism. Whatever the case, we teachers are here continuing to do our jobs. Please assure no further cuts are made and stay true to your recognition that those of us stuck in compression should not be asked to continue to stay underpaid.

If cuts have to be made, lead by example and take your 20% pay cut first; then ask us to give up our bonuses, but make sure to fund the compression differentials. This is the right thing to do on behalf of the hundreds of teachers who continued to do their job while the State willfully and knowingly continued to underpay them, even while the economic upturn was in full swing.

Thank you for your time and understanding on this matter,
--
Perry S. Buchalter, NBCT
BA, Fine Arts/CTE Department
Molokai High School

Gmail

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

How dare you cut my pay!

Andrew Sanchez <andrewsanchez54@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm going to skip the pleasantries and get to the point. It is absolutely despicable that the BOE would even SUGGEST pay cuts for teachers! It's even more despicable that the BOE would expect schools to return to face to face instruction AND take pay cuts. Have u no heart?! It's bad enough the superintendent refuses to listen to scientists regarding our return to school. We have new cases daily and that number will sky rocket once schools open, but none of you seem to care! These draconian measures are absolutely disgusting and we demand our appropriate pay. If you're going to try and kill us, at least pay us appropriately.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony for Action Item G and D

Mollie Carstens <molliejcarstens@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing to share my concern over the possible discontinuance of pay differentials for teachers in hard to staff areas, Action Item G.

My name is Mollie Carstens and I have been teaching in Hawaii public schools for the last 8 years. I currently teach 5th grade at King Kamehameha Elementary. This year will be my 9th, if the DOE can get a plan in place that makes me feel safe returning to school. At the moment, my principal is unable to answer my questions or those of my colleagues. In fact, he has expressed a lack of confidence in the guidance he has been given and shared that his CAS feels the same way.

Removing the pay differential at the current time would be catastrophic to families like mine. My husband had to take a 35% pay cut to help the company he works for survive the situation posed to our community by Covid 19 and the travel ban, which we both fully support. We recently partnered with a company, Landed, that provides down payment assistance to educators, to buy a home. Our income has been drastically reduced with my husband's pay cut. Losing the differential pay would provide significant hardship to my household, especially if the company my husband works for can't make it since his unemployment would be 60% of 65% of his original salary, leaving him with only 39% of the income we planned on having when we purchased our home.

Teachers don't feel confident returning to the classroom in the current situation. Reducing our pay is not going to encourage us to take the risks we are being asked to take when we return to the classroom.

I also want to say a few words on reopening. I can't wait to be back in the classroom with my students when it is safe. I feel a lot better returning to the classroom now that changes to the travel quarantine have been postponed. But I have significant concerns about how reopening will affect the community I work in. I think we will look back with hindsight and regret if something happens in our school communities when visitors return. I would like to propose coordinating changes to the travel ban with school holidays or a period of distance learning so that we can see the impact of the return of visitors without putting students, families, and educators at risk.

I feel less confident in returning today after seeing the senate's hearing with Dr. Kishimoto on Thursday.

Thank you,
Mollie Carstens

Gmail

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

Testimony on Action Item G

Kira Swearingen <kswearingen@waialae.edu> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:32 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

This extra compensation has been a huge difference coming in for myself and my family. The work we do as special educators goes above & beyond our expectations. This is not to say general education teachers to not deserve, I believe all teachers should get a pay raise. However, this was a pledge you made to us and I request you keep it. Please take this into consideration. Special Education teachers are the biggest advocates for their students, so allow us to advocate for our rights to this extra compensation for the 20-21 year & on.

Mahalo nui,
Kira Swearingen
Waialae Public Charter School
Special Education Teacher
--

Kira Swearingen
Student Support Teacher
Wai'alae Elementary Public Charter School
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816
(808) 733-4880 ext. 274
http://www.waialae.edu

Wai'alae School
Celebrating Childhood

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Testimony

Gerianne Fujihara <geriannemf@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a special education teacher in our public schools. I teach my own classes;co-teach in inclusion classes; modify the curriculum material and assessments for all of my students, schedule/meet/prepare IEP's/eligibility/re-eval meetings; take data and evaluate quarterly progress reports; take data daily for behavioral specialist; advise skill trainers and provide data sheets for skill trainers; and deal with behavioral challenged children. I am highly qualified in special education and in my subject content area. During the COVid 19 quarantine, I scheduled and did virtual IEP's/ RE-EVal/Transition meetings. I provided lessons daily and gave feedback through a google classroom form we created. I met weekly online with my colleagues and provided hard copies of work through mail for my hard to reach students. I even used my personal cell phone number to reach out to parents and students. We are even expected to teach our students everyday in the up coming school year when health standards are not even being monitored correctly. Students always come to school sick and some parent's don't want to pick them up because they know that their child is being well taken cared of at our public schools with access to skill trainers, speech therapists, behavioral specialists, etc. It would be a real shame on the government's part to promise us a differential so we will continue to work hard in this stressful and demanding position and then take it away when they know we cannot quit because of the dire state of the economy and the hardships this Covid 19 has already had on our families and community. Please don't make things worse for our families and community by taking away our differential. It's a real slap to our face.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

reject differential pay

Ellen Farnsworth <ellen.farnsworth@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I urge you to reject the proposal of deferring the differential pay for hard to staff schools which would cause teacher pay to reduce. I am one of those teachers who have received the additional pay and it has truly helped in this challenging time. Cost of living keeps going up in Hawaii and will continue with all the new challenges from Covid 19 and teacher pay is not supporting those increases. This differential is allowing teachers who are in specialty situations to cope with those increases in the cost of living. I beg you not to defer those funds.

Thank you for all your help and support!

Ellen Farnsworth
Kealakehe Intermediate School
Drama Teacher

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

Testimony

Haley van Noord <alohahaley@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:46 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Board of Education Members,

My name is Haley van Weemen van Noord, I am a ten year veteran teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School on the island of Maui. In my ten years at LIS I have seen a large turn-over of teachers and have taken on the role as a Mentor Teacher in addition to my 7th Grade Life Science position to do my part in contributing to the retention of wonderful teachers. This may be the year I join my fallen colleagues in leaving the profession and Hawaii.

Lahaina was not surprisingly deemed a "Hard to Staff" location. And the extra compensation I have received as a result of differential pay has been a life-saver. The retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, but it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students.

There is so much uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, I know of at least two teachers at my school who have already chosen to retire or leave the profession. This pay cut will be the last straw for many already barely hanging on.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Please do not allow this to happen. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Lastly, HAWAII SCHOOL CAMPUS ARE NOT READY TO REOPEN. Please do not take what Superintendent Kishimoto is reporting as truth for all schools. I know that teachers on my campus HAVE NOT received any professional development over the last four months unless we have sought it out ourselves. I know the summer school teachers on our campus DO NOT FEEL SAFE and the protocols to protect them are not present. Please push back the reopening until school administrators are ready to safely open or allow us a 100% distance learning option so we know we can keep students, their families, staff and teachers safe.

Mahalo,

Haley van Weemen van Noord, MS, NBCT

Lahaina Intermediate School

Gmail

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

Differentials

Jennifer Lee <jkmlee1216@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education,
I urge you to continue differentials for our teachers in hard-to-staff schools.

I am a teacher at a hard-to-staff school. All my students are in the low SES category. With that comes a lot of challenges and hurdles teachers face in the classroom. Beyond teaching the curriculum, we need to focus on teaching SEL, encouraging and sustaining attendance, supporting single parents or grandparents who are stepping in as guardians, PBIS, making sure their basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing are being met, creating positive and caring relationships with them, providing school supplies through out the year, and supporting families with state programs or guidance just to name a few.

During distance learning more duties were added to the list such as calling and emailing families daily, quickly learning now to use online technology to benefit my students with minimal support, trying to get comfortable teaching online in front of family members sitting next to their child, meeting with each student individually on a daily basis because in lower elementary it was very difficult to support families and students in small groups, preparing for the next school year while still teaching current students with minimal support from the state, helping families borrow computers from our school, calling internet providers to see what they could offer to our families in need, volunteering to pass out grab and go meals, packing up my room and grabbing my materials needed to teach in a short period of time, technology support for the parents or grandparents who were supporting our younger students, and the list goes on.

Teachers in hard-to-staff schools have been and are continuing to work extra hard for the students and families. I urge you to continue differentials for our teachers in hard-to-staff schools.

Thank you,
Jennifer Lee

Gmail

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

Proposed reduction in pay for special education teachers

Zarmun Duke <zarmun.duke@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I want to let you know I continue to support the additional pay being provided to teachers in hard to staff locations and subjects. Even with the supplemental income, teachers in Hawaii give up many hundreds of thousands of dollars compared to the mainland. Salary wise, I used to make about $25,000 more per year. The gap increases yearly and is compounded by a 25% cost of living increase. I chose to return to the land of my ancestors knowing it would cost me about a million dollars in pay and living costs over the remainder of my career.
I live in a neighborhood rife with crime and violence because it is a place I can afford. I make daily decisions about whether I can afford a certain option.
Our students, our future, deserve the best. Their outcomes are shaped by the influences surrounding them as they develop. They deserve the best teachers and facilities. The additional pay helped to bring them better instruction. Taking away more than 15% of pay is not motivation to do the best job possible. It won't convince the next generation of potential teachers to commit to educating Hawaii's future. Better to head for the mainland where they can afford to raise a family and own a home or consider an alternative career.
Please continue to support our educational system for the sake of Hawaii's future. Our children and families deserve the best.
Zarmun Duke

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http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20Temporary%2

W Cheryl Materne <lavasista@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The thing I forgot to mention- in my first letter- if you renege on your promise- I will have to return to working two jobs. That doesn't leave ANY extra time for my first job or family. At 64, after 17 years in service to my students—-that's a pretty big stressor.
Again- Shame on you all for even considering this.
W. Cheryl Materne

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

kenji kudo <kenjiwiz@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:11 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,
I am testifying on Action Item G : Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
My name is Kenji Kudo and I am a Fully Self Contained classroom Special Education teacher at Waimea Canyon Middle School. I came out of retirement from California because I learned there was a shortage of Special Education Teachers. With one of the highest cost of living standards in the country and the very challenging work in Special Education, it is understandable why it is difficult to recruit new teachers for Special Education.
At an earlier teachers union meeting this year, our union president mentioned a discussion he had with a former Special Education Teacher. Corey mentioned the extra $10,000 compensation for Special Education Teachers and asked him if he would become a Special Education Teacher again. Corey said the teacher's reply was "There is no way in hell I would ever do that again."
But as the data has shown, with the extra compensation it has helped to retain teachers and to recruit new ones in these very challenging teaching positions.
I urge the Board NOT to discontinue the compensation. Thank you very much for taking the time to read my testimony.
Best regards,
Kenji Kudo

Gmail

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

testimony

Sarah Gillis <sarahnishikawagillis@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a new certified SPED teacher. I have spent the summer learning how to properly write IEPs. I already have students on my caseload and I feel that it's unfair to take the differential away. I am dual certified as a gen. ed and SPED teacher. If we get the differential taken away I'm afraid I will take SPED off of my license next school year. Please do not take the differential away.

Sincerely,
Sarah Gillis
Keaau Middle School math teacher

Gmail

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

Keep extra compensation for sped, Hawaiian language, hard to fill areas

Jaclyn Wills <keakulina@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Jaclyn Wills <jaclyn_96792@yahoo.com>

Why are you considering kicking us (Teachers) while we are down? This Covid situation is putting us in a hazardous condition to begin with, specifically with teaching sped, and here you want to discuss taking away the extra compensation that was promised for at least this year? I guess you do want to push teachers out of the education system. Yes, where is all the $ that is supposed to go to schools? We already buy our supplies for kids. I was just looking online as to how I can make my environment safe such as teaching outside, looking at ez ups tarps, umbrellas, so that I can do my job, all without your Boe/ doe support , thank you. Monies that get allocated to education, do not come down to us “pee ons“ in the class room. It gets filtered from above as to where they see fit. I used my extra monies to help buy supplies, snacks, clothing etc (Yes, even underwear for A girl who did not have any)for my students. Give the $ to the teachers in teacher pay as they will put them to good use and will apply it back to their children in the classroom. I find it a slap in the face.... a couple slaps in the face , as you are even considering to take away the differentials. I guess I will be one of many that will explore retirement this year rather than next..... I was willing to get into the classroom with accommodations in two weeks, but seeing there is no real support with this system.....retirement is looking good
Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Cruel Cut to Educator Pay Check

kathy rutecki <kathyrutecki@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Many teachers in Hawaii must supplement their incomes with part-time jobs. Those jobs have died from COVID. Therefore, please do not add insult to injury by cutting teacher pay checks.

Kathy Rutecki
Lahaina Intermediate

Gmail

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

Testimony

Chantel Paekukui <cpaekukui@waipahuelem.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:42 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am composing this email to testify on Action Item G:
Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha,
My name is Chantel Paekukui. I am a kindergarten special education teacher at Waipahu Elementary School. I am writing to discuss the proposal of the discontinuance of the SPED differential I have been receiving. The extra compensation I have been receiving on my paycheck has helped my family tremendously. When my first daughter was born, my husband and I decided that I would be the one to pay for medical for the entire family. My medical payment takes out $700+ a paycheck. With that said, the extra compensation I receive from being a special education teacher helps to pay my medical so that my family can utilize more of my paycheck to help with every day expenses. I write to you today to ask that you refuse this proposal because my family benefits tremendously from this.

Thank you for your time,
Chantel Paekukui

Gmail

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

Testimony

Christina Pascua <christina.pascua@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:46 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am testifying **against ACTION ITEM G:** Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Christina and I am a Special Education teacher at Kapolei High School. I am currently receiving a differential and it not only helped with my own personal finances, but it has increased my morale. What do I mean by that? I entered the teaching profession because of my passion and love for our community and our community's future. Our Keiki is our hope, and educators hold an essential position to ensure our children can be the best version of themselves to make a positive impact and CHANGE in our world for our future generations to come!

Medical attention is an individual's right, and doctors and nurses are paid fairly well, if not more than fair. However, education is also an individual's right, but teachers have fought so many years to have a fair pay. Many of my colleagues near and far have master's degrees such as myself, but we get paid way less than those that may not necessarily have a degree! Why is that? Why are educators not valued for our passion, education, and expertise? Educators essentially help educate these current and past doctors, nurses, construction workers, politicians, and so on... so why are we not valued for this? We strive to make an impact in our community, but we are definitely FAR from being valued.

Qualified teachers are becoming an extinct population. Are we not in agreement as to why this is a problem? If our pay continues to be unfair, let alone without this differential, we are then driving qualified teachers with passion and dedication out of the profession to simply make a fair living wage. The lasting effects of this would not only drive quality educators away, but it ultimately affects our Keiki, our community, and our community's future.

I hope that the BOE reanalyzes what the priority is for our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very respectfully,
--
Christina Pascua
Transition Coordinator
Kapolei High School
Google Voice Phone# (text/call): 662-276-1716
christina.pascua@k12.hi.us

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

Testimony

Jessica Watanabe <jesswatanabe21@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Jessica Bryant and I am a Sped Teacher at Kapunahala Elementary School on the island of Oahu. I am also a parent to an 8 year old, who attends Kapunahala Elementary School and 3 year old who will be attending preschool in the Fall. I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I started in the DOE when I was 21 years old, teaching K-3 Sped Resource. My starting salary was a measly $40,000, which after taxes ended up being about $30,000. Can any of you on the Board imagine living off of that salary? I endured the Furloughs in 2010-2011 and I continued to teach. Over the course of my 11 years in the DOE, I have sacrificed my nights, weekends and breaks with my family to take over 20 professional development courses in order to move up steps on the pay scale.

I love what I do and the impact I have made on countless children's lives. But loving what I do will not pay my mortgage or put food on the table for my children. Teachers in Hawaii are severely underpaid and overworked. As a Sped teacher, I will say that I put in over 40+ hours a week of overtime. I come to work early to set up my room and plan lessons. I stay at work late to grade or write IEP paperwork. Not to mention the 2-3 hour IEP meetings we facilitate after school hours.

During the pandemic, teachers worked harder than ever! I worked 12 hour days on top of taking care of my children. I put my family on the back burner to make sure my students were getting the education they deserve. I learned new online programs and I created a new curriculum with just weeks notice. I continued to serve our State and the children in it. As a Sped teacher, I had more responsibilities than a general education teacher. I created individual lesson plans for each student, I had virtual IEP meetings and did IEP paperwork, I kept tedious communication logs for all of my students, I graded progress reports and report cards. I had mental breakdowns weekly and my children and husband picked me up and helped me to keep going.

I am fully aware of the economic strain the pandemic has caused on our country. But I know that there is money and it can be given to us as promised. the state is just choosing to use that money elsewhere. The differential pay was promised to us before the pandemic and that promise encouraged many teachers to move to Sped positions. It would be unethical and unprofessional of the BOE to take away that money.

Qualified teachers will quit and student's will once again be left vulnerable. I urge you to reconsider the retraction of differential pay.

Mahalo,
Jessica Bryant

Gmail

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

Please Reconsoder

Teva Medeiros <20310629@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai, ‘O au ‘o Kumu Teva Medeiros no ke kula kaiapuni o Maui ma Lahainaluna (I am Teva Medeiros, one of the kumu for Hawaiian Imersion at Lahainaluna). To whom it may concern, I am humbly asking that you please reconsider retracting the pay differentials that was given to Hawai‘i school teachers. I understands that we have fallen on hard times all around, however taking away the pay differentials will hurt our economy as well. Many of us teachers our contributing members of society with bills, families, and other requirements that have long been a struggle for teachers especially in the high cost of Hawai‘i living. These pay differentials have Honestly aided me in providing for my family in the high cost of living in Lahaina, Maui, in fact it is giving me enough money to have a fighting chance in the housing market in this modern day, without this pay differential my family and I won‘t be able to afford a house. I feel like that is a problem many teachers are facing with this aproach to again take away from the already struggling teachers. Please, I ask for you to reconsider and allow teachers to keep the pay differentials as well as their pau in general in order to keep our Hawai‘i teachers afloat in our modern day economy.

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

Testimony

Teva Medeiros <teva.medeiros@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Aloha mai, ‘O au ‘o Kumu Teva Medeiros no ke kula kaiapuni o Maui ma Lahainaluna (I am Teva Medeiros, one of the kumu for Hawaiian Imersion at Lahainaluna). To whom it may concern, I am humbly asking that you please reconsider retracting the pay differentials that was given to Hawai‘i school teachers. I understands that we have fallen on hard times all around, however taking away the pay differentials will hurt our economy as well. Many of us teachers our contributing members of society with bills, families, and other requirements that have long been a struggle for teachers especially in the high cost of Hawai‘i living. These pay differentials have Honestly aided me in providing for my family in the high cost of living in Lahaina, Maui, in fact it is giving me enough money to have a fighting chance in the housing market in this modern day, without this pay differential my family and I won‘t be able to afford a house. I feel like that is a problem many teachers are facing with this aproach to again take away from the already struggling teachers. Please, I ask for you to reconsider and allow teachers to keep the pay differentials as well as their pau in general in order to keep our Hawai‘i teachers afloat in our modern day economy.

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

Testimony against discontinuance of differentials

Corina Calsing <cbcalsing@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members:

For the 2020-2021 school year, I have been placed as both a fifth grade general education teacher and a special education teacher for those fifth graders in my inclusion class. I am dual certified, so that is not the issue. Essentially I am working as my own inclusion teacher.

The issue is, when I accepted this reassignment in February, I had assurances from the HSTA, the school district, and the legislature that I would be paid a $10,000 differential for special education. I had no problem taking on the workload of a special education teacher and a regular education teacher, given the monetary incentive. Doing double duty allowed my school to have small class sizes for the coming year and helped avoid creating a hard-to-fill special education position. It was win/win.

However, without the differential, I will be actually doing the work of two teachers while only receiving the pay of one. That is not fair.

In addition, with the threat of COVID-19 in the classroom, the increased planning necessary to support students in a blended learning environment, our governor's threats to furlough or cut our base pay, my husband's drop in income thanks to the pandemic... Shall I go on? Do we not have enough to worry about without additional threats to our well-being? On your end, you already have many teachers who will not return to the classroom because of COVID as well as a pre-existing shortfall of qualified teachers. Should there be any additional cuts in pay, more teachers will walk, including this educator with nearly twenty years in the classroom. I will not be able to afford to stay in Hawaii, and will have to take my experience elsewhere.

I hope you think long and hard about how you can continue to incentivize your workforce, rather than driving them into an untenable financial situation, which is exactly what you are threatening. With everything you are asking us to do in the coming school year, you need to find ways to offer us more, not less. Get it right, please.

Cordially,

Corina Calsing
Fifth grade special education
Kalaniana'ole Elementary and Intermediate School
Papaikou, HI

--
Report ebook piracy http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx

Gmail

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

REJECT PROPOSAL

Elizabeth Daddario <elizabeth.daddario@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am writing to you today to ask that you reject the proposal of aiming to defer millions of dollars from those hardworking teachers that specialize in special education, hawaiian language, and at hard-to-staff schools. These teachers are the backbones and cores of this world and deserve to be treated as such. Please do think about the impact these teachers have had on so many of our lives. Without my Hawaiian language education teachers I would be nothing, they teach so much more than language but they teach a culture and the pride of knowing the culture.

Thank you,
Elizabeth

Gmail

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

Pay

David Brown <hidbro@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please don’t go backwards in pay for Special Education Teachers, Hawaiian teachers and had to staff schools.
Thank you
David Brown
Lahaina

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

CONTINUE SHORTAGE DIFFERENTIALS

Lacey Perez <lwalts9@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Lacey Perez and I work at Wheeler Elementary School. When the Special Education differential was implemented, it took a great burden off my family. We were considering moving away from the island due to financial reasons. However, the differential truly helped us continue to live in the place we call home.

By stopping the pay differentials, you are going back on a promise to your teachers. The teachers and keiki deserve better. By doing away with the pay differentials, you are sending a message to the affected teachers that they are not a priority.

Thank you.

Lacey Perez

Gmail

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

Differential pay cuts?!

Winter Leuteneker <cleuteneke@aol.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may Concern:
I have been working in Maui as a Special educator for over 19 years. I have worked with all ages at a few different schools. Currently I am at Kalama Intermediate. I must say making cuts at this time would be devastating, as many teachers are going through extra time & work to just prepare for this upcoming school year. We are in need of teachers who are able to get the jobs done already. Taking away the $$ that is something special ed teachers work extra hard for.. there would likely be a backlash of teachers not all doing it. We also have many more risks: Many of the special needs population are not able to wear masks, need hand over hand instructions, need toliet training & more. There is also the fact that each teacher is supposed to spend a minimum of 3 hours per student in the start of year to go over what the student may need. Many of the Special Ed students will end of being at school more then the general population due to higher needs.. which means does teachers are doing more , not less.
Also some of our family members may have lost work due to COVID & that extra we get makes a big difference in this whole picture.
Please consider all the factors & understand making these cuts would not be good. The opening of school comes with costs & this is one that needs to stay in place.
Thank you for your time
Winter Leuteneker

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Julia Fernandez <juliamin10@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Julia Fernandez. I work as a preschool special education teacher at Mokulele Elementary School.

Please do not cut funding for educators in these areas. This would drastically impact my livelihood. I have already purchased face shields, masks, temporal thermometer, and an air purifier for my students and classroom. I used the money I received from my pay differential to make this happen.

My school is small so we have no extra funding for anything. The extra money I receive goes back into my classroom. And, I'm able to pay for my children's childcare. If I don't get this differential then my family and my students suffer.

The differentials are a way to help all the disadvantaged communities. You need to take care of the educators who directly impact their community. Differentials are a win for Hawaii's future.
#All for one!!! #BOE for SPED

Thank you for your consideration!!!

Julia Fernandez

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Deferring Shortage Differntials

R. Ostermiller <ostermillerr@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

While our state is experiencing a time of extraordinary circumstances and managing a situation that at times seems outside the realm of our control, where and how resources are allocated need careful and prudent consideration for the utmost effectiveness.

Deferring the pay for shortage differentials for the hard to recruit teacher positions would be the most detrimental place where money would be withheld. It is vital to our vulnerable population to receive instructional services from qualified and certified teachers. It is apparent in the data that this has worked. Many qualified and certified teachers have move into these positions and this has outpaced the numbers that have left.

With so many unknowns facing the start of the new school year, the vulnerable population and their families would be assured that there will be qualified teachers prepared to handle the demands of teaching during this difficult and tumultuous time. If our focus in education is on the student first, procuring and securing qualified and certified teachers in these hard to recruit positions is a priority and we should not waver. Do not defer shortage differentials for hard to recruit teachers positions.

Sincerely,

Renée Ostermiller
Special Education/ELA Teacher
Kalama Intermediate School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Marissa Johnson <mdj437@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Marissa Johnson, I am a preschool special education teacher at Waialae El. School. I am emailing regarding Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

This differential allowed me to work only 1 extra job and actually stand a chance of catching up on student loan debt. It opened opportunity to move from the tiniest studio apts which I have had to live in for 7 years. I just moved into an acceptable living situation and was so incredibly grateful that decision makers had finally come to respect my profession enough to grant me a nearly livable wage. Now I'm panicking.

As we turn over a new pandemic chapter, I have been sick with anxiety over the disproportionate risk a teacher in my position, preschool sped, will have to accept compared with the majority of teachers. Any good rule can be in place, but if a child needs help eating, using the bathroom (maybe in diapers), wiping their nose, wearing their mask, washing their hands, and additionally have unsafe habits such as mouthing objects, it's my job to help. How am I protected? How can I keep these children safe?

How is a teacher in my position supposed to choose this path for themselves when they are being asked to risk their health and safety? How can a teacher become highly qualified and seek continued education if after getting their master's degree, there is no way to pay back the student debt? I am one of the highly qualified teachers that are of constant topic and which are hard to find for the outlined shortage areas. I have made this work my passion for 10 years, and now suddenly I feel it wouldn't be fair to myself or to kids to continue on in this field. How could I ever meet their needs if I can't meet my own? How can I be their teacher, counselor, paraprofessional, PE teacher, music teacher, healthcare professional, and biggest cheerleader when I am drowning trying to continue teaching in this culture of disrespecting and undervaluing teachers.

I have to seriously consider another career path if I lose the shortage differential. It was a saving grace for me and one of the only reasons it made sense to remain in the position especially after new pandemic expectations entered the picture. My job is my passion, but my health and safety (and that of others) is much more important. A paycheck is important, but a demeaning one makes seriously looking at other options very appealing. I lose sleep at night regularly worrying about how I can keep putting myself in such a position of chosen neglect and how I will be there for the kids. I hope if I have to leave the field, I can continue to influence education and HI's keiki in some other way. I have cried a lot over this and feel so defeated.

I hop this testimony will be taken very seriously. Please assure us that we will continue to receive our shortage area/hard to staff pay differential.

Thank you,

Marissa

Gmail

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

pay differentials

Heidi Miller <hawaiiansun4me@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

One of the ways to attract and maintain a competent and well educated teaching staff is through incentives. The State of Hawaii teacher pay is significantly well below the rest of the country, 45% less than what I made in the state of Washington when I left there to move here in 2018, when adjusted for the cost of living. Do we want competent teachers who are trained or are we ok with substitutes and constant turnover at rates the rest of the country deems appalling? You decide the fate of our keiki.

Heidi Miller

Gmail

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

Pay differential

Heather Sheridan <mommyx100@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To All Concerned,

This letter is in reference to not keeping with an agreement that was made to reinstate our pay differential. This will definitely hurt me, my family and the students I work with. We are entering a very questionable time period with only a hope that we can make the distancing plan work and although it is a better plan than 4th quarter of last school year we can not afford pay to be cut. Last quarter I put in more time than my contracted hours as it is keeping up with the Covid-19 parent logs, parent/student letters/WebEx sessions and added time communicating with my families. This school year ALL schools, especially ours will be playing catch up with the lack of student growth due to the pandemic.

Considering the DOE has a shortage of not only qualified General Education teachers, but in my case Special Education teachers this agreement needs to be a priority at this time. This school year will and already has put added teacher hours in to play, just trying to start an effective scheduling strategy to meet all students and families needs. The DOE and BOE can't afford to loose teachers that are certified at this time. I have worked for this state since 2003. I have let things go for years. I can make more in other states with the price of living. Don't let this situation go please. At this time, too many lives are effected by this agreement.

Thank you for your time,

Heather Sheridan

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

SPED differential

Ashley Neve <aneve@solomonelementary.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning,

Please take the time to reconsider cutting the SPED pay differential for the 20-21 SY.
SPED teachers are not compensated correctly for their position in the state of Hawaii.
Due to their specialized education and unique job requirements, their pay deserves to be on par with the national average for sped teachers, not to mention an adjustment for the cost of living. This pay increase helps retain and recruit teachers from the mainland and it raises the morale of our educators.

Ashley Neve, MAT
Solomon Elementary School
Pre-K Special Education Teacher
Room B107
"Together Everyone Achieves More."

Gmail

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

Don’t cut differential pay

Jiena Marquez <jienamarquez@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE,
Please do NOT cut differential pay for special education teachers, hard to fill areas, etc.

The differential pay has kept and attracted certified teachers to fill these positions that students need. Pls don’t allow the cut to take away from our students in need.

-Jiena Marquez

Gmail

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

Testimony

Katrina Haddin <katrina.haddin@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:51 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a teacher, this extra money for different classes of teachers is critical for being able to stay. My children's tuition runs $2500 a month... with what's left after everything is taken out without the extra money each month leaves me with 1/3 my rent...with the extra money, I can pull off my rent with a little bit from my husband...I'm not sure it would be cost effective to only have $500 cash towards bills each month. Please don't allocate these funds to other sources
Thanks
Katrina haddin
KHS
808-365-3906

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

Testimony -pay differential for special education teachers

Lawrenz Yasuko <yasukolawrenz@yahoo.co.jp> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:52 AM
Reply-To: Lawrenz Yasuko <yasukolawrenz@yahoo.co.jp>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE members,

We are testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education for 2020-2021 school year. Our grandson is an elementary student residing on the island of Hawaii. His former special education teachers are no longer in Hawaii because of the low pay, high cost of living and workload. The high teacher turnover rate leads to inconsistencies for our most vulnerable children who desperately need consistency. Our grandson has profound autism and cognitive disability and need special education teachers who would stay in Hawaii.

Please reject the proposal.
Thank you,
Aki and Tatsuko Kanai

(no subject)

Raquel Bernholz <raquel.bernholz@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I've been teaching in Hawaii in special education at Nanakuli High and Intermediate for ten years now. One of the hardest things about working at Nanakuli is the high over turn of teachers and the lack of teachers.
Our students consistently score low on state tests. One of the factors is lack of consistency in staffing. School wide programming struggles to take hold when the staff who needs to implement it are not available.
I understand why good teachers are hard to find and keep especially in special education and on the coast. As a special education teacher I have additional kuliana/responsibilities, with IEPs writing, meeting and implementing. Working on the coast I am more often met with students whose struggles of homelessness, neglect, drugs and alcohol abuse (parent and themselves), depression, foster kids, lack of educated role models and those struggles affect my classroom. This year I spent hours on the phone and in online meetings with various agencies to find housing and support for three different girls. One of the girls has an intellectual disability with an IQ of 58 and was identified as a victim of sex trafficking. That girl needed wrap around services for housing, advocacy, health and that takes time and so much energy.
Personally I was applying to new jobs with higher pay in the fall of 2019. Upon learning about the pay differential I decided I can afford to continue my position which I love. I'm a single parent of two children 9 and 11 and receive no child support. I don't qualify for state assistance making a few hundred over the limit but not enough to rent or buy a home of my own. My children and I luckily live with my parents and share a room. I want to live on my own. I should be able to live on my own. I have a graduate degree work full time as a teacher. I took a part time job a year ago to help myself to get out on my own. Unfortunately with the covid shutdown I lost that job. Losing this pay will result in my application for a new job. I'm seriously considering moving to the mainland where pay goes further since cost of living is less. If the state could assist teachers with housing specifically that would help me teach in Hawaii on the coast. I went to Nanakuli as a student. I live on the coast. I was the 2020 class advisor. I've been involved in student council for five years. I attend Children's Community Council meetings to learn about supports for students with special needs. I want to continue to teach on the coast in special education but I need to prioritize my children. Without the pay differential I will be looking into moving to the mainland and other higher paying jobs.
Please continue to support special needs teachers and hard to staff schools, Mahalo.

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

Testimony

Yasuko Lawrenz <yasukolawrenz@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Yasuko Lawrenz. I am a special education teacher in Hilo, Hawaii. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for teachers in special education.

Because of the pay differential, some teachers who had left special education are returning to special education. The differential is effective. Without the differential, we will go back to losing special education teachers, as they return to general education or mainland USA.

I am speaking on behalf of our vulnerable children who are not able to speak on their own. They suffer when their teachers are unqualified or over-worked and under-staffed.

Thank you,
Yasuko Lawrenz

Gmail

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

Testimony

Christina Tran <ctran808@hawaii.edu> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersions programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Aloha, my name is Christina Tran and I will be a SPED resource teacher at Kalihi Kai Elementary School in the 2020-2021 SY. As a first-year SPED teacher who will be actively working with vulnerable students in person in the midst of the global pandemic, I will be entering the most difficult year of teaching teachers will ever experience. According to the Economic Policy Institute and the Council for Exceptional Children, more K-12 public education jobs were lost in April than in all the Great Recession, where 50% were among special education teachers and paraprofessionals. To discontinue the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersions programs will further discourage teachers from returning to the teaching profession during this pandemic. With the regression of our students with special needs during this pandemic, special education teachers are needed now more than ever to make sure our students meet their educational goals and grow up to be successful people in the world. Special education teachers are working very hard in the best interest of our students while working from home, taking care of family, and juggling our own personal lives and expenses. To discontinue the extra compensation when so many special education teachers depend on that extra money to get by will discourage us from continuing in the profession and it makes us feel like our jobs our not valued enough by the state. Please think again about the discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersions programs for the 2020-2021 school year and reject the proposal.

Mahalo.

Gmail

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

Please continue the differential pay

Darcy <darcy_gabrielle@live.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,

I have been a special education teacher for 10 years with the Hawaii DOE. Over the years, our job has become much more difficult and despite my just recently earning my masters degree in special education, I have been contemplating transferring to a general education position in recent years. Since the differential pay was initiated, it has definitely given me motivation to stay in special education. Please keep the differential pay... our jobs are not easy. Many of us put ourselves in harms way daily, endure neglect and mistreatment by admin and parents, suffer harsh working conditions, and on top of all that, need to maintain legal obligations and manage paperwork and countless meetings. Our rate for burn out is ten times that of a general education teacher. Now is not the time to take this compensation away. We need qualified special educators.

Darcy Gabrielle, Kaimiloa Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Melissa Turner <melissa.hsta@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:15 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board Members,

I would like to say thank you to the board members for hearing our testimony.
My name is Melissa Turner and I am a special education teacher for 5th and 6th grade at Honokaa Elementary School on the Island of Hawaii. I am speaking in opposition to item G on the agenda. As most of you know Hawaii has some very rural locations. Honokaa is a small town in the middle of ranches and undeveloped land. The closest major grocery store is 20 miles away and approximately 30 minutes drive. The closest Walmart and Target are 37 miles away and about a 50 minute drive. The nearest Costco is 60 miles away and that is 1 hour and 20 minute drive. Now remember these are times without road construction and there is a lot of road work underway on the Hamakua coast. The reason you approved the differentials is because these are hard to staff areas. The reason they are hard to staff is because most of them are very rural and not many people are willing to sacrifice the convenience of living in an urban area or the long drive to get to and from work each day. That doesn't make the students at our school any less worthy of certified teachers. The differentials help to offset the cost of living in a rural area or driving into a rural area to teach. This has made our area more appealing to teachers and has brought us many more applicants to our job postings. My Principal announced at a faculty meeting that for the first time he had applicants in the double digits for our posted position. He was confident that he would find the right fit for our school. So yes indeed it has made a major difference for our rural schools. If you discontinue the differentials the teachers that were recruited for our opening will leave the coming school year. Thus, putting us back into the undesirable position to hire long term subs, uncertified teachers, and even worse of all VACANT positions.

I would also like to touch on the need for the special education differential. As many of you know our most vulnerable students are those with disabilities. They come with a wide variety of needs from just struggling in one area to not even being able to feed themselves. Special education teachers are asked to do what many will not. We work with the most challenging students where others have given up. We have students that throw tantrums, hit and run from us, most times without prior warning. We work very hard to keep regular routines for these students. These students are the most difficult to work with and that is why many special education teachers leave the field. Since the differentials went into place we have had, as stated above, quality applicants apply for our special education positions. Most years they have been filled with long term subs. If you discontinue the differential for special education we will have a mass exodus of teachers from special education classrooms. Let's face it the general population is much easier to teach than the one that comes with special needs. Remember these are our most vulnerable students. They demand a higher level of attention and are the most difficult to educate. The differential has demonstrated what it was intended to do. To get more qualified teachers for our most vulnerable population. I implore you to oppose the discontinuation of the differentials.

Sincerely,
Melissa Turner

Gmail

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

Testimony

Chadd Engel <chaddwilliamengel@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 17, 2020 at 8:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am writing this testimony to state how
immoral, dishonest, and ignorant it would be for the BOE to accept, let alone consider, the proposed: “Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year.”

First and foremost, the purpose of these differentials were to address the needs of our students in areas of our schools that were severely lacking qualified staffing as well as anyone who even had inkling of how to address our students needs. Now, through the understanding of differentials being paid, we had finally begun the process of addressing these areas of need. Where several teachers transferred and applied to positions that included these differentials. To walk back on that now, would be immoral, dishonest and ignorant. I plead to you to not be the person who puts political pocket books ahead of morality, especially when comes to addressing the needs of our students. I write this as a proud special education instructor and father of two.

Sincerely,

Chadd Engel
Kihei Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony - oppose cutting differential pay

Sayles Day <sayles.day@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:35 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Kathleen Day
Wai'anae High School Teacher
General Business Meeting
Position: **Opposition** to item VI. cut to differential pay

As the state makes decisions for how to manage the immense financial deficit, differential pay for teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographic areas, and Hawaiian language immersions should **not** be the place to cut.

These state workers are already bearing an immense burden. Educating, supporting, and caring for our youth must be prioritized. Students in these high-need areas of education have already been neglected, and the COVID crisis has both exposed existing inequity, and exacerbated it.

Cutting differential pay would be another significant and painful blow to teachers who are putting their students first and always have been, but are facing increasing burnout and low retention.

Please do the right thing and prioritize the youth who need it most, by validating and supporting the self-giving, crucial work of their teachers.

Sayles Day

Gmail

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

Testimony - July 23, 2020

Daphna Ehrenhalt <daphnajackson@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:41 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Daphna Ehrenhalt and I am an educator at Kea'au Elementary School. I am writing in regards to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Kea'au is a hard-to-staff geographical location, and even a temporary discontinuance of extra compensation will make it more difficult for teachers at our school to service our students during this unprecedented time. Many of us spend our own money to help supply and support our students with their academic and emotional needs. Removing this differential will potentially drop our 90% complex area teacher retention rate, when we are already facing a teacher shortage this upcoming school year. Please reject this proposal so 4,000 teachers will not see a drop in pay.

This money goes back into my classroom in many ways. I buy extra supplies for my students, as well as items for their social and emotional learning. Many of my students have personalized pencil pouches, sensory toys and other instructional aids due to that small boost in my income. With our budgets being slashed this upcoming school year, my students will have to go without even more than they did before.

Sincerely,

Daphna Ehrenhalt

It's chaos, be kind. - Michelle McNamara

Gmail

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

Testimony

Joshua Klaassen <joshua.klaassen@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Name: Joshua Klaassen, Special Education teacher, Ewa Makai Middle School
Meeting: General Business Meeting July 23. 2020
Agenda Item: G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
Position: Oppose, with comments.

I am a special education teacher who has been teaching in Hawaii for 10 years. Adjusted for the high cost of living, especially housing, teachers in Hawaii have consistently been some of the lowest paid in the nation. On a teacher's pay, it has been hard to stay afloat, much less get ahead of bills and rent.

The promise of these hard-to-fill and Special Education differentials this year encouraged me to transition from a non-classroom teaching position back to a special education classroom teaching position this school year. I know several other qualified special education teachers who have also moved back into special education positions this school year. In addition, I know a number of good, experienced teachers who have transferred to leeward coast schools for the hard-to-fill differential. While I have not seen quantitative data to support it, I have seen anecdotal reports that the intent of these differentials may be having its desired effect: qualified special education teachers moving into special education teaching roles, and experienced teachers moving to hard-to-staff schools.

Removing these differentials would remove the incentive to stay in Hawaii, or to stay in necessary teaching positions. Without the differential, I would need to consider moving to the mainland where I could earn both higher pay and have a lower cost of living. I don't want to do that, but it might be the right thing to do for my family.

Moreover, teachers and other public employees who make enough to live on also spend money in our communities. Removing thousands of dollars from our pay will significantly reduce our spending at local businesses, thereby reducing their ability to stay afloat. Maintaining pay for teachers and public employees can help to maintain the economic health of our community. Reducing our pay may seem like fiscal prudence, but it will only make a bad situation worse.

Joshua Klaassen
Special Education teacher
Ewa Makai Middle School
Ewa Beach, Hawaii

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Testimony: Differential pay

Patricia Gorski <gorskified@me.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Patty Gorski and I have been teaching special education in the state of Hawaii for 9 years now. I have spent countless hours working on IEP's, progress reports, designing and implementing individualized programming, Creating brand new curriculum, and modifying gen ed curriculum- all on my own time. It has been exhausting and I truly felt I was moving toward burnout the last year as I began considering alternate careers that paid more and demanded less of my "off the clock time." The BOE literally saved me from burnout by finally recognizing the difficulties and unpaid hours seen as a teacher of special education with the new differential pay this year. When the transfer period opened, I did not bother to apply for any district positions because I was finally fairly compensated.
While I understand that "these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted the state's overall revenue and budget," I cannot see any good coming out of discontinued differential pay that was agreed upon in January of this year. It will not only be the teachers who will suffer and leave the profession, but more so the students who will struggle to have an adequate education as they will be taught by more and more unqualified emergency hires. I do not want my son to have a public education largely provided by those incapable of appropriate instruction.
The differential pay was agreed upon to encourage those like myself who were teetering on career change due to unreasonable workload paired with a meager salary to stay in the classroom. It was put in place to attract qualified veteran teachers from out of state to meet the needs of our students as we struggle with teacher shortages not only in special education, but in hard to staff areas and hawaiian immersion. And it worked! So many teachers I know who were ready to leave the profession after working 10 years and still needing a second job to pay rent decided to stay- their efforts and hard work finally recognized. We celebrated the BOE's decision- a decision that deepened the trust between the BOE and teachers and gave us hope.
I feel duped at this point. Had I known the differential pay would be cut, I certainly would've applied for a district position where I would be paid enough to make ends meet. At this point, with my child only attending school 2-3 days a week, I will have to pay for childcare with that differential pay boost. I am a recently single mother paying all bills and rent on my own, and I depend on the differential to make that happen. If the differential is cut, I will surely have to find another job or move elsewhere to the mainland. If it is a temporary cut, how long will it be? Is it a short enough time that I won't have to worry about finding another job?
I know we have rainy day funds and federal funding available- at what point do we use those instead of taking teacher pay (and why hasn't there been another bill on the table to generate more education revenue from million dollar property taxes)? And when does it stop? Will I also suffer a 20% pay cut on top of losing the differential? The consequences of those actions are dire.
I urge you to continue the differential pay. It is making such a difference, and shows that the BOE cares about the teachers. The BOE's recognition of the hard work and long hours spent as a special education teacher breathed life into me and my teaching, urging me to pursue more knowledge and post grad level training to be the best I can be in the classroom! Please do not snuff out that light.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Patty Gorski

Gmail

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

Testimony

Hotmail <snpkauai@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**

Please do not go back on your promise. The differentials are working, please look at the data. I am a special education teacher who has received the differential and I thank you. I have three children in three different schools and every year hear about the shortages. My child is in special education and year after year has unqualified teachers/ substitute teachers or EA's provide his specialized instruction and it has been unfair. Please continue to fund the differentials for these hard to staff positions. The students are the ones who are impacted the most when positions are left vacant or filled with unqualified staff or dumped onto a special education teacher who already has a large case load. We need to fill these positions so students can move from Elementary to Middle to High and continue to receive quality specialized instruction. So much is lost when students move up into a new school and end up with multiple substitute teachers. Teachers work way over their shift each day, have meetings after 2:45, or over the summer. These students deserve highly qualified trained special education teachers and the differential make the position even more desirable.

Please reject the proposal.

Thank you for your time and, consideration.
Aloha,

Shaunna
Kauai

Gmail

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

Pay cuts

Eric Kurosawa <ekuro29@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Really? You’re placing us in a dangerous situation and you want are pay reduced? You got to be kidding
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Teacher Testimony

Greg Lind Jr <koaligg@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I work in Special Education in Hana, Maui. We are one of the most remote schools in the state and our tiny town has the highest unemployment rate in the State. During this pandemic, our ‘ohana had to shut down our business and now all 7 of us rely on my income alone. We’re barely making ends meet and we had to apply for a forbearance on our mortgage because my income is not enough to pay for our home (two bedroom one bath) and essential bills.
I look forward to returning to school, I miss the children I work with and I want to help our keiki grow through face to face instruction rather than distance learning. Returning to school endangers the health of myself and my family. My parents live in Hana and we spend a lot of time with them, but due to my father’s high risk, we won’t be able to spend time with them once we return to school.
And now to read that the State is considering a cut to my pay??? I’m an essential worker putting my health on the line. I receive a pay differential because I chose to work in the area of highest need in a school that has the highest need of certified teachers.
With the ongoing pandemic and the negative impact it has had on our financial ability to keep a roof over our head, a further cut in pay would possibly mean that we could lose our home!!! We have no credit card debt, no car payments, and we do not eat out. We live very simply so that we can make due with what we have. A cut to my income would put my 5 school ages children At risk of losing their home while I am on the front line educating disabled children. Cut elsewhere!

Mahalo,
Giovanna Lind
Special Education Teacher
Hana High and Elementary

G&G Lind

Gmail

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

Continue differentials

Matt Birmingham <mpbirmingham@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:28 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Matt Birmingham. This summer, I was one of the many dedicated SPED teachers who worked ESY (extended school year) despite the pandemic. It was challenging, but the reward of working with amazing students is always worth it. While teaching, I also had the opportunity to work with some very talented and caring skills trainers. One of the skills trainers had been in his role for many years. The differential helped to make it financially worth it for him to pursue becoming a sped teacher. He had recently signed up for the program at UH. Without the differential, I do not know if he will go through with it and the state will potentially lose out on a caring sped teacher. I am sure there are many other similar situations.

In addition, I teach because I have a passion for working with students. The SPED differential made me feel valued and respected. For the first time in 15 years of teaching in Hawaii, I felt like I could make it financially out here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Matthew Birmingham

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jennifer Nagle <jenenagle80@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
In regards to the decision to discontinue the hard to staff pay for certain teachers, I would like to give my opinion. I have been teaching at Kapaa elementary school for 5 five years. I have an early childhood degree in regular education and special education. I made the decision to move to special education because our school desperately needs qualified individuals. I have been working a part time job for the past two years because I cannot afford to live on my salary alone. I also have 5 kids to support. The boost in pay was going to help and my family after this extremely difficult time of covid. If I do not get this pay I will have to increase the hours I work a second job. Thereby taking away time with my family and it will take away time I can spend working for my students. I know I will be putting in more hours with writing ieps, parent meeting, progress monitoring and how am I supposed to do all that without being compensated. The BOE made a promise to help support teachers and this feels like a slap in the face to some of your hardest working teachers.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Nagle

Please Do Not Take Away the Differentials

John Fitzpatrick <jfitzpatrick@mwis.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Honorable Board of Education Members;

My name is John Fitzpatrick (Fitz) and I am a general education teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School. I am in strong support of the continuation of the Differentials to help us reduce the teacher shortage crisis (1000+ teacher positions vacant=30,000+ students negatively affected) that is going to balloon in the new norm of Covid 19. Several months ago the super intendent said she thought these were important and she could keep them in place this year by using Covid 19 funding. The increased pay for special education teachers, hard to staff areas, Hawaiian immersion teachers, and getting teachers that have sacrificed for years without getting the proper step increases during economic turmoil to get back to the step they have earned.

My pay is not affected by these moves but I see that it does benefit my students and I because we might be able to retain a few of our amazing special education teachers. It is night and day when you have amazing special education teachers like Ms. D'Auria, Ms. Yamamura, and Ms. Wiberg to name a few amazing ones at Maui Waena Intermediate School. These teachers have an enormous impact on our students everyday. I am extremely happy that they are getting a $10,000 raise a year starting today because of the actions taken. I hope you find a way to support them and make the raise permanent for special education positions around the state. Furthermore, I know several teachers that have shifted to a special education position because of these differentials. It is in bad faith to remove these shortage differentials two weeks before school starts and we have to risk our lives to educate the haumana of Hawai'i.

At our school we have around a 15% annual turnover and it is extremely costly and difficult to get in a rhythm when there is high turnover. At schools in Hana, Lanai, Molokai, and Waianae to name a few the turnover is much higher and positions go unfilled. I can only imagine the difficulties of teaching in these schools. It must be especially difficult since many of these schools are so small and teachers have to teach multiple subjects over several grade levels. I am so happy these teachers are getting a $8,000 pay raise because of actions that have been taken. I know several teachers that have moved to Lahaina in order to teach and help them address their teacher shortage in that area. Taking away this differential means they will no longer have the gas money to make the commute.

Hawaiian Immersion teachers have it tough because they have to put in extra hours translating everything, creating their own curriculum, translating communication to English only speaking teachers and it is harder to get a teaching credential to be a Hawaiian immersion teacher. For 70+ years Hawaiians were not allowed to speak their language and it is time to make this injustice right by incentivizing those that speak Hawaiian or want to study Hawaiian to go into the teaching profession. Furthermore, this is the cheapest of all the differentials (~$1 million) and it is an important step to writing the wrongs perpetrated against the Hawaiian people. The super intendant is asking for $6 million for a computer program to educate our k-5 keiki, we should be prioritising that money to paying teachers instead of computer programers. To address the SEL needs of our haumana we can't rely on computer programs like ascellus and iready. We need amazing teachers like the ones we have in the Hawaiian immersion programs throughout the state of Hawaii.

Lastly, I am in strong support of getting teachers back to the proper step based on their years of experience. It is not right that a teacher working 20+ years makes the same amount as someone who has been working 10 years. Teachers with more experience are more effective at their jobs and have so much to share with newer teachers like myself. It is to our advantage to make them feel valued by finding the funds in order to put them back to the step that they have earned with their years of service. Furthermore we need to make it so teachers get automatic annual step increases, they should no longer be bargained for, thus eliminating the step compression problem. It is time to get our veteran teachers to the correct step as they risk their lives to teach our haumana.

Now that we are in a bargaining year and we have another economic and health crisis teachers were the first to be threatened with a 20% pay cut by Gov. Ige. 50-75% of teachers already lost their second and third jobs, I am in the category of losing 20% of my income because I no longer have a second job. I do not think I can survive having a 40% pay cut. We need to use all monies to possible to pay for teachers, principals, secretaries, janitors, custodians, cafeteria chefs to name a few. We have to prioritise people over computer programs like ascellus and iready.

It is time that we address the teacher shortage crisis and we do everything we can to make sure 1,000 teaching positions are filled with highly qualified and effective teachers. The steps previously proposed by the DOE, the Board of Education, and the Governor are still critical in order to address the teacher shortage crisis.

Please support them and find a way to make teachers and their students a priority during the challenges of Covid 19.

Mahalo,
Fitz

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ana Paula Menezes <anapaulambacpcu@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action G

I am teaching SPED this because of the differential and the hard to staff schools. I am a single mother of 4 kids going through a divorce. I need the money to pay my bills! Please do not cut the differential and hard to staff monies.

We need the money!

Thank you for your consideration.
Ana Paula Menezes, SPED teacher
Kealakehe High School
--
Thank you,
Ana Paula Menezes, MBA, CPCU

Gmail

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

Please Support the Pay Differentials

John Fitzpatrick <fitzformaui@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:47 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Honorable Board of Education Members;

My name is John Fitzpatrick (Fitz) and I am a general education teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School. I am in strong support of the continuation of the Differentials to help us reduce the teacher shortage crisis (1000+ teacher positions vacant=30,000+ students negatively affected) that is going to balloon in the new norm of Covid 19. Several months ago the super intendent said she thought these were important and she could keep them in place this year by using Covid 19 funding. The increased pay for special education teachers, hard to staff areas, Hawaiian immersion teachers, and getting teachers that have sacrificed for years without getting the proper step increases during economic turmoil to get back to the step they have earned.

My pay is not affected by these moves but I see that it does benefit my students and I because we might be able to retain a few of our amazing special education teachers. It is night and day when you have amazing special education teachers like Ms. D'Auria, Ms. Yamamura, and Ms. Wiberg to name a few amazing ones at Maui Waena Intermediate School. These teachers have an enormous impact on our students everyday. I am extremely happy that they are getting a $10,000 raise a year starting today because of the actions taken. I hope you find a way to support them and make the raise permanent for special education positions around the state. Furthermore, I know several teachers that have shifted to a special education position because of these differentials. It is in bad faith to remove these shortage differentials two weeks before school starts and we have to risk our lives to educate the haumana of Hawai'i.

At our school we have around a 15% annual turnover and it is extremely costly and difficult to get in a rhythm when there is high turnover. At schools in Hana, Lanai, Molokai, and Waianae to name a few the turnover is much higher and positions go unfilled. I can only imagine the difficulties of teaching in these schools. It must be especially difficult since many of these schools are so small and teachers have to teach multiple subjects over several grade levels. I am so happy these teachers are getting a $8,000 pay raise because of actions that have been taken. I know several teachers that have moved to Lahaina in order to teach and help them address their teacher shortage in that area. Taking away this differential means they will no longer have the gas money to make the commute.

Hawaiian Immersion teachers have it tough because they have to put in extra hours translating everything, creating their own curriculum, translating communication to English only speaking teachers and it is harder to get a teaching credential to be a Hawaiian immersion teacher. For 70+ years Hawaiians were not allowed to speak their language and it is time to make this injustice right by incentivizing those that speak Hawaiian or want to study Hawaiian to go into the teaching profession. Furthermore, this is the cheapest of all the differentials (~$1 million) and it is an important step to writing the wrongs perpetrated against the Hawaiian people. The super intendant is asking for $6 million for a computer program to educate our k-5 keiki, we should be prioritising that money to paying teachers instead of computer programers. To address the SEL needs of our haumana we can't rely on computer programs like ascellus and iready. We need amazing teachers like the ones we have in the Hawaiian immersion programs throughout the state of Hawaii.

Lastly, I am in strong support of getting teachers back to the proper step based on their years of experience. It is not right that a teacher working 20+ years makes the same amount as someone who has been working 10 years. Teachers with more experience are more effective at their jobs and have so much to share with newer teachers like myself. It is to our advantage to make them feel valued by finding the funds in order to put them back to the step that they have earned with their years of service. Furthermore we need to make it so teachers get automatic annual step increases, they should no longer be bargained for, thus eliminating the step compression problem. It is time to get our veteran teachers to the correct step as they risk their lives to teach our haumana.

Now that we are in a bargaining year and we have another economic and health crisis teachers were the first to be threatened with a 20% pay cut by Gov. Ige. 50-75% of teachers already lost their second and third jobs, I am in the category of losing 20% of my income because I no longer have a second job. I do not think I can survive having a 40% pay cut. We need to use all monies to possible to pay for teachers, principals, secretaries, janitors, custodians, cafeteria chefs to name a few. We have to prioritise people over computer programs like ascellus and iready.

It is time that we address the teacher shortage crisis and we do everything we can to make sure 1,000 teaching positions are filled with highly qualified and effective teachers. The steps previously proposed by the DOE, the Board of Education, and the Governor are still critical in order to address the teacher shortage crisis.

Please support them and find a way to make teachers and their students a priority during the challenges of Covid 19.

Mahalo,
Fitz

John Fitzpatrick
Fitz For Maui
email: fitzformaui@gmail.com
phone: 808-268-1073
85 Mokuahi St.
Makawao,
Hi, 96768

Gmail

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

Testimony

Carrie Rose <carrieann.1983@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian immersion programs for the 2020/2021 school year.

To whom it may concern:
My name is Carrie Rose. I was a licensed special education teacher at Waialua Elementary School from 2015-2018. I was also born and raised in Wahiawa. I was forced to leave the job and kids and colleagues I loved (not to mention the rest of my family) to relocate to the mainland in 2018 because I was not able to support myself and my two children on my teacher salary. I had a masters degree and I could not afford to feed my kids without help from my family. Removal of these funds is NOT OKAY. How can you talk about quality education and qualified educators when you keep showing them that they are NOT a priority in Hawaii. It is disgusting and so sad for our keiki. Those teachers who get that stipend work in the poorest communities with the least family and community support. Their jobs are HARD. They feed their students and clothe them. They talk to them and care for them and counsel them and give them possibly the only hug they will receive that day. They spend countless hours after work hours to plan and purchase and plan some more.

I challenge each of you to live one week with their jobs. They are most likely newer teachers because those positions are hard to fill so frequently vacant. You arrive at 7am and leave at 5:00. While you're there, be sure to individualize EVERY lesson for EVERY student. Be sure to read their IEPs and Behavior Plans first to ensure you are in compliance with IDEA. But also check with your district and admin and Chapter 60 law to ensure that they don't have any additional requirements. Take them to the bathroom. Change their diaper and wipe them clean. Teach them to pull up and button their pants. Hand over hand. Help them wash their hands. Anticipate their meltdowns based on known triggers. Buy those 3 extra books at the school book fair for the foster kids or the students you suspect live in abusive households because you know they have never had that opportunity. After school, organize an IEP meeting and coordinate the schedules of 6 professionals and a difficult parent. Be sure to send drafts home 3 days before the meeting so parents can review it, but make sure they see it's a DRAFT so that you are not sued by the parent for predetermination. Take on a due process student. Attend ALL THE MEETINGS. When you get home in the evening take care of your kids and take a shower. Put your kids to bed then get your computer out to make those changes based on new data you just collected while administering a standardized test on your lunch hour because there's no other time. Listen to the 10:00 news as Joe Moore talks about another dispute between HSTA and DOE and feel it in your heart. Feel that you have dedicated your entire life to the future of Hawaii and your government DOES NOT CARE. They don't care that the cost of living is skyrocketing and you can't afford to live. They don't care that you are spending your own personal time and money on your students. They don't care that you are reporting suspected neglect and abuse charges and crying for that child because you see it in their eyes. They don't care that removing this stipend will negatively impact more of our disabled students, the students who frequently do not have a voice. Well, this is ME, doing what I got into teaching to do and being their voice.... STOP! STOP THE BUDGET CUTS! STOP THE UNDERFUNDING! STOP FORCING GOOD TEACHERS OUT OF HAWAII BECAUSE THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO LIVE! STOP IGNORING THE NEEDS OF TEACHERS BECAUSE YOU CAN'T FIGURE OUT A BUDGET. STOP CAVING TO POLITICAL PRESSURES AND PRIORITIZE OUR STUDENTS AND OUR TEACHERS! The future of Hawaii depends on it.

Sincerely,
Carrie Rose
(808) 371-7761
7884 Antelope Ridge Point
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Gmail

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

Cutting pay Special education teachers

Tammy Criscuolo Gamble <tammy_gamble@baldwin.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:54 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it May Concern:
When they gave special education teachers the $10,000 differential that was the main reason I stayed on the island. As you know with Covid there are many people unemployed including teachers spouses. Without this differential I may have to return to the mainland. We will not be able to make ends meet.

I understand that they need to cut costs but this is not fair to special teachers who already do not make the amount of money they do on other parts of the United States.

Tammy Gamble
Baldwin High school Wailuku Hawaii
--
Tammy Criscuolo Gamble, Ed.S. H.P. Baldwin High School

To the Members of the Board:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(G): Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Anne Alves and I am a teacher in the leeward district on Oahu at a "hard-to-staff" school, and I am one of the 4,000 teachers who's pay will be *reduced* as I am forced to head back into the classroom during a global pandemic. I have a Master's of Education in Teaching and have been ranked as "highly effective" for every year I was on-cycle for the Educator Effectiveness System. Yet every night for the past few weeks I have repeatedly woken up from panic attacks in the middle of the night because of decisions that are being made that will put me and my fellow educators in danger of catching this deadly virus. I have to remind myself to have the serenity to accept the things I cannot change and to change the things I can. I cannot change the fact that we are being forced back into the classroom instead of starting the school year with distance learning. God give me the serenity. But I *can* do thigs that will help to protect myself and my students. I can submit testimony and I can write to my senators, both of which I have been doing. (It's shocking how many hours I have spent on these tasks alone in the past 4 months.) I can pre-prepare materials, which has honestly been very difficult because it's still not 100% clear what a school day at the secondary level will really look like. Another thing I can do is buy necessary materials to keep myself and my students as safe as possible. I understand that hand sanitizers etc. are supposed to be provided for all, but how can I rely on this promise when the DOE has always fallen short on what is promised us?

One such promise made was that the state would aggressively tackle our ever-intensifying teacher shortage crisis. I attended the sessions where educators were asked to submit testimony on how we are undervalued and underpaid. I listened to the stories of other educators who had been teaching far longer than I have but who make $10,000 less than I do because they were victims of furlough Fridays and compression pay. Every single time HSTA asked us to submit testimony I did, not only to fight for my own needs but for the needs of others as well. Honestly, I was shocked when the shortage differentials were approved. Pleasantly shocked, but shocked no less because this was the first time it felt like we were starting to truly be treated as professionals who deserved adequate compensation for the important work we do. The veteran teachers who were victims of compression were not as

lucky, but it was a start. We were promised “extra” compensation if we were willing to accept these extra challenging positions.

When the first internal transfer period began, I jumped at the chance to earn more money for my hard work and dedication. I knew transferring to a hard-to-staff school would present a whole new set of challenges, but I was ready for it if that meant I wouldn’t have to worry about missing a mortgage payment if a $1,000 emergency were to arise. It also meant that I would have to take a whole different approach to teaching, being that I would be serving a highly vulnerable population. But I am malleable and I became a teacher because I wanted to help change the world for the better. I also knew that with this additional pay would come additional expenses. First of all, my commute will be further away, so I will be spending more just to get to work. Secondly, I understood that a significant portion of this “extra” pay would also be going right back into the school. Every year I spend around $1000 for classroom supplies, including healthy snacks for the kids who come to school hungry. I knew my supply budget would have to increase, but that’s ok because I was promised to be paid more. You know all those fundraisers that occur throughout the year for various extra-curricular or even curricular needs? Guess who buys the bulk of what is being sold by our students? More pay means I can help support more kids have fulfilling school experiences. The school is the heart of the community. By making a positive impact on students, I could positively impact the Waianae community.

To be quite frank, the way the Department of Education has been handling this pandemic has shown me how little regard it has for teachers. I feel used. We had to come up with distance learning lessons on the fly, on unfamiliar platforms, with no real training. We stepped up to the plate. We had to fight to keep our school buildings closed (via negotiations with HSTA) when Dr. Kishimoto was trying to send us back in April. (I’m not trying to place any blame on anyone; I don’t for one second envy the difficult position she is in, making decisions that impact the health and safety of our communities.) We had to reach out to each and every individual student and their families for wellness checks throughout the distance learning period. The responsibilities thrust upon us were ever-amounting, but we persevered, because we *needed to do it for our students*. It wasn’t just a job. These are young people who depended on us at a time of need. And now we are at a point where we are being forced back into the classroom, at a time when Covid-19 cases are alarmingly on the rise. I feel like we are being used as pawns in an absurd political game. Teachers keep bringing up valid questions and concerns about our health, safety, and well-being, but these questions continuously get deflected and

conversation returns to these fallacious “bubbles”. And now the extra pay that we were promised is on the chopping block?

We were lured into these positions and now that we are in them, the DOE wants to take away the carrots they dangled in front of us. How is this even being considered?

Respectfully,
Anne Alves

Testimony Fwd: Differentials

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:06 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com>
Date: July 18, 2020 at 12:52:25 AM HST
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>
Subject: Differentials

Dear BOE, do I need to say it? There is a teacher shortage right now. Right before Coronavirus it was time for us to true up our salaries from when we were furloughed in the Lingle administration. We have already lost that. Now, we are asked to be frontline workers, at risk of dying each and every day. Now you/they want us to become miracle workers, somehow teaching distance-learning while we deliver in class instruction at the same time??? Much pressure is put on teachers and principals to hurriedly open schools without clear directives, proper PPE, any distance learning training AT ALL (despite what Kishimoto said)—-and we have to deal with parents that decide that they do or do not like our mask policy! How are we rewarded? We are provided with no childcare for our own children, while we watch the kids in the community around us! In addition, you/they?? want to nix our differentials for being in hard to staff schools???? Talk of paycuts and getting rid of our differentials when we should be truing up our salaries that we already lost due to the pandemic ????!!!! Are you kidding me???, This will not look good to the parents or the news media and many teachers will absolutely quit and you/they will have a hard time recruiting teachers from the mainland by showing them how they can get all their homework done on the beach! We put ourselves at risk every day and we work so hard because we love the children of our communities—-but we feel like we are being totally taken advantage of and kicked around and bullied! It needs to stop!
Sick without Covid, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Pay Differentials

Daniel Lewer <dlewer21@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I know these are challenging times for everybody. The state needs to look for ways to reign in spending to make up for massive budget shortfalls caused by COVID-19. I am writing as a ten-year teacher to urge not to remove the pay differentials for hard to fill schools as a means to balance the budget.

I have taught at Honoka'a High and Intermediate School for ten years and in that time, we have always had teacher shortages. It changes year to year in which departments are most impacted by the inability to find or keep qualified and quality teachers at our school. Half of our high school math department were substitutes last year. Some of the classes had different subs each week and little stability.

A couple of years ago we created a "Freshman Academy" at HHIS to better support incoming freshmen with similar and consistent teaching, grading, and behavioral expectations. For two years it worked well before teachers had left, new ones came in, and unqualified teachers hired and the consistency sprung leaks and became entirely ineffective. Due to these the inability to keep quality teachers at the school, the once successful academy has dissolved and there is no plan for getting it up again. Next year for the third year in a row, one of the four core teachers will be replaced and it seems by a non-qualified teacher as of now.

I too was considering a change in the profession but the differential helped and convinced me to stay at the school. Teacher absence and inconsistency has dramtic impacts on student achievement and well being. I do urge you to keep these differentials to try to better serve our keiki who are most vulnerable.

Thanks for your time and consideration,
Daniel Lewer

July 18, 2020

Aloha Members of Hawai'i BOE.

I am among the 4000 teachers in HIDOE that looks to lose the shortage differential if the BOE does what it wants, not what it needs. Throughout my 20+ years teaching, I have worked in multiple states, always in the area of Special Education. I have seen my workload outside of teaching the keiki increase substantially as parents have become more litigious and school districts require more documentation. It takes a special person to be a special education teacher. A person who knows that they will take home what happens in the classroom, in the school and in the IEP meetings and continue to teach our kids with all we have.

In many of our classroom settings, resource, co-taught in general education or self-contained, we teach to multiple levels, and some multiple subjects, simultaneously. All of this takes time, extra time above our general responsibilities to our schools. We are knowledgeable on grade level standards as well as the grades below to help close the gap. We gather information from other teachers as to the progress of our students across settings, search or create individualized goals and objectives, use non intuitive programs to write and maintain IEPs, run IEP meetings and complete the time sensitive PWNs and other paperwork. We collaborate with our co-teachers for in class instruction and the teachers of our students we don't directly teach. We communicate with parents and administration to best service our special education population. Do not forget quarterly Special Education progress report cards. All of this is above our regular responsibilities of teaching/co-teaching curriculum with attendance, grades, recess duty and field trips and attending grade level, department - content and SPED, and district meetings. Special education teachers use their lunch time to write IEPs as the 45 minutes of daily prep does not cover classroom and special education prep. Often, SPED teachers arrive early and leave late to accomplish such tasks as to not take away from our passion, teaching our keiki.

It is not easy to be a special education teacher but we do it because we love it. The differential validates that our above and beyond makes a difference and is needed. Without this differential, teachers might not teach to their true potential as we are stretched too thin and might need to make a choice in teaching practices or teaching at all. Special education teachers, as the well as the other teachers receiving the differential deserve it. We do something others are not trained to do.

"The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas," said Hawaii State Teachers Association President Corey Rosenlee. "Why would you cut a program that works? It defies logic."

Sincerely,

Barbara Cooper

Barbara Cooper, EDS
Special Education Teacher and Care Coordinator
Special Education Department Head
Lokelani Intermediate School in Kihei (Maui)

Gmail

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

Testimony

Tammy Criscuolo Gamble <tammy_gamble@baldwin.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:31 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it May Concern:
When they gave special education teachers the $10,000 differential that was the main reason I stayed on the island. As you know with Covid there are many people unemployed including teachers spouses. Without this differential I may have to return to the mainland. We will not be able to make ends meet.

I understand that they need to cut costs but this is not fair to special teachers who already do not make the amount of money they do on other parts of the United States.

Tammy Gamble
Baldwin High school Wailuku Hawaii
--
Tammy Criscuolo Gamble, Ed.S. H.P. Baldwin High School

Gmail

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

Pay differential for SPED

Tami Kreft <tcollings@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of keeping the pay differential provided to SPED teachers. Although I understand that the lack of funds due to Covid-19 have created a need to cut back, I do not believe it is fair that the cut backs come from taken the pay differential away from SPED teachers for several reasons.

The first being that the state has had a problem with filling the vacancies for SPED, providing this incentive helped in filling the gap, if you cancel the incident I've, you increase the cha ce of the teachers leaving causing yet another large deficit in the amount of qualified individuals to fill the positions.

A second reason that the pay should not be decreased is due to the increased responsibility that SPED teachers have. As a FSC teacher, I am not provided with a planning period, therefore, I need to do all of my prep on my own time. Due to the mixed ability level of the students in my class, I am required to design individual lesson plans for each student, as opposed to a lesson plan for an entire class. This takes an increased amount of time which should be compensated for.

A third reason is the need for the educator to be well versed in all levels of curriculum as opposed to just needing to specialize in the curriculum for the subject or grade level. This also takes additional time to do that is normally outside of the normal pay hours.

Finally, the amount of additional work, outside of lesson planning, that is required such as data tracking, Creating and modifying IEPs, Progress Reports, Meetings, trainings, etc which are above and beyond the number that gen ed classroom teachers have to contend with, should be compensated for. If you take away the pay differential, Will these added responsibilities be removed as well?

It is not in the best interest of the DOE, students, families, and teachers to take the pay differential away from SPED educators unless you want the services to be reduced to this population of students, who deserve to be given more opportunities, not less.

Sincerely,

Tami Kreft
HIDOE Special Educator
Wheeler Middle School
503-504-2661

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Loke Han <lokelani_han@kualapuu.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Davelyn Lokelani Han
I am a kumu at Kualapuʻu Public Conversion Charter School in the Kula Kaiapuni o Kualapuʻu Hawaiian Language Immersion program on the island of Molokaʻi.
Up until last year, I was a Highly Qualified teacher at my school, then the State implemented the Kaiapuni Liscensure. I no longer was HQ and my position, which I have held for close to 14 years, would be jeopardized if I did not pass a proficiency exam. This summer, I took the Hawaiian 490 class, took the exam and finally, - I am a HQ Kaiapuni teacher!

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I DO NOT SUPPORT this action! Our teachers need to be compensated for these specific specialty areas that are either under qualified or understaffed. We cannot allow committed, highly invested educators to be swayed to abandon their posts because they cannot afford to support their family with a cut in pay.

Please continue the extra compensation to support classroom teachers in Special Education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian Language Immersion programs.

Mahalo,
Lokelani Han
Kumu and proud member HSTA

Gmail

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

Added pay for Special Education Teachers

John Dreher <dreherjohn@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi BOE,
My Principal is making us SPED Teachers meet daily with our students where as the General ED Teachers are only meeting with their students TWICE a week face to face! This is putting us more at risk
Plus all of our other obligations

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony: do not defer shortage differentials

Katrina Karl <20095207@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:37 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Board of Education members,

My name is Katrina Karl and I am a special education teacher at Waipahu High School. I am writing to urge you to reject the proposal that would defer shortage differentials for special education teachers, Hawaiian immersion teachers, and teachers at hard-to-staff schools.

I can only speak for my fellow special education teachers when I say that continued differential pay is fundamental to valuing the additional workload we assume on top of teaching. Our additional work includes but is not limited to:
- scheduling and facilitating annual IEP, re-evaluation, and review meetings
- communicating with our IEP base list students' teachers, parents, and other IEP team members frequently throughout the year
- completing quarterly progress reports, filing paperwork in confidential folders
- collaborating with co-teachers, educational assistants, and other professionals who support our students
- for 12th grade special education teachers like myself, completing summary of performance paperwork to help students transition into continued education

The majority of these responsibilities cannot be completed during our contract hours, so I urge you to continue appropriately compensating us for the great deal of additional time and effort we put in to ensure that our students' and families' needs are met, and that our schools remain in compliance with special education laws.

Due to COVID-19, we will have yet another responsibility to meet and determine what skills our students may have lost due to being off campus for the last quarter of this past school year. I also anticipate that it will be especially challenging for all of us to get our students with special needs accustomed to hybrid learning, with a great deal of repetition, reteaching, and other accommodations that their general education peers may not require to such a great extent.

I finally urge you not to defer our differential pay as doing so will further discourage new teachers from entering or remaining in our profession as special education teachers, or at hard-to-staff schools. Our differential pay was not only in place to appropriately compensate us for our heavy workload, but also to encourage teachers to enter or remain in these positions that are especially hard hit amidst our teacher shortage crisis. Deferring our differential pay will simply mean that providing it to us in the first place was only the briefest "band-aid" solution to these specific shortages. If you remove this incentive, how will you ensure that special education teachers and teachers at hard-to-staff schools do not quickly move on to other teaching positions, schools, or careers, leaving us where we started in light of our teacher shortage, or worse off? I doubt that there are other realistic incentives to offer. Consider, at the end of the day, where this will leave Hawaii's most vulnerable students whom we serve.

Katrina Karl

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

Please Continue the Differentials

Lisa Barton <mrs.l.barton@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 12:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Afternoon Board of Education Members:

My name is Mrs. Lisa Barton. I have been teaching in underprivileged schools for all of my 20+ years career. I currently teach at Makaha Elementary School. I became a SpEd teacher four years ago to fill a gap. There was a position at my school where the teacher quit in the first quarter, so long term subs had to fill the spot. The classroom was made up of three kindergarteners and one 1st grader.

Three kindergarteners and one 1st grader. The behavior of these students were very unmanageable. All four students suffered through tremendous trauma which affected their self-regulation skills. The teacher quit because it was too difficult. All four students were all cognitively sufficient, just emotionally feral. I filled that spot because I knew I could and I wouldn't quit.

I did not become a SpEd teacher for the money. Neither have I chosen to work in the Nanakuli-Wai`anae complex for the hard-to-fill differential. I love building human capital. I love taking kids the farthest from learning and teaching them. I am not alone in these sentiments of why I chose to teach out on the Westside and why I became a SpEd teacher.

The purpose of the differentials is to entice teachers to become SpEd teachers and to entice teachers to come to hard-to-fill schools. Yes, it is working. Guess who needs to train them? Yes, us veteran teachers. Even taking a veteran teacher from another district and placing them into a school similar to mine takes an entirely new pedagogy and approach to our students and community in order to be successful. The year is always full of veteran teachers providing professional development to our newer colleagues.

What the differential represents to all of us is a reward and an acknowledgement, sure, but to those veterans in these hard-to-fill schools and in the SpEd field, this differential is also a fair wage.

The greater goal is to even out the playing field. The achievement gap continues to widen even more so with the COVID slide and the Digital Divide. We would be taking a huge step backwards by taking away this differential. We need effective teachers to meet needs in these areas. The teachers who are already here, need enforcement. Please continue with the differentials.

Thank you for your time and for your thoughtfulness. Thank you for listening to my voice as I try to speak for those who cannot.

Aloha,
Mrs. Lisa Barton, MEd
Special Education Teacher
Makaha Elementary

--

Mrs. L. Barton, MEd
General/Special Education Teacher
Makaha Elementary School
808-780-8021

I had three students who unknowingly called me to become what they needed. What they needed was someone with

an extraordinary level of compassion, kindness, and patience, all of which I did not possess so I had to turn to God for. In return, I got so much.

One of them, a little kindergartener, gave me these scribbles and rose petals she fished out her pocket. I was dismayed. Other kids gave me chocolates and flowers, what was this? She read her scribbles to me which were written with letters only she could decipher. It said how much she loved me and how much I made her happy. She then told me that her family didn't want to get me flowers so all by herself she had to do this, this, and that to finally be able to present to me, with such pride, these beautiful rose petals she snuck into her pocket. Oh, how I felt loved, loved deeply.

"...she has given everything she has." Luke 21:4

Gmail

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

temporary discontinuance of differential pay for teachers

Pat Fernandes <1supawahine@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I do not support the discontinuance of teacher shortage differentials. We already have a teacher shortage and with the current Corvid19 issues we will have even more teacher shortages. You will need these differentials to maintain the current teachers. The pay scale for teachers is one of the lowest in the nation...this combined with the high cost of living forces many teachers to move or seek other employment.

Please continue this differential pay for teacher shortage to keep the highly qualified teachers we have.

Mahalo

Patricia Fernandes

Shortage Differentials

Carmen Kinny <carmenkinny@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,

I'm a special education teacher at an elementary school going into my third year of teaching. I've had years of experience in general education and special education before getting licensed, so am coming from an understanding of what should be provided to teachers so that they can do their jobs.

I have been bombarded with endless impossible challenges to face completely alone in my first two years as a licensed special education teacher. It has been completely unacceptable. New special education teachers are being treated as second class citizens in comparison to all general education teachers. In fact, the EAs at my school are being given far superior work conditions in comparison to me.

Special education has always been monumentally more challenging and time consuming than general education. Now, on top of the already much harder job, special education teachers are being forced to perform a second job in the name of inclusion. At my school, I am forced to do my entire special education job (which I already didn't have enough time to do) and to be a general education teacher on top of that. Last year, I taught over fifty first graders across two classrooms the entire general education curriculum, and also crammed in special education for my 14 IDEA students throughout the day. I ran back and forth in between classes working out of a suitcase, changing groups of students and changing from special education to general education instruction every half hour to hour. On top of this, I was (ofcourse) writing my IEPs on the weekends.

I'm being forced to teach (with more skill than my peers since I'm a provisional teacher up for review) with no classroom, almost no supplies (since I can only use what I can fit into a suitcase), no control of my environment, and no say in the workings of the classroom.

All students need stability, control, consistency, and a myriad of learning tools. However, students with IDEA need these things MUCH MORE than general education students--meaning that special education teachers need these things MUCH MORE than general education teachers so we can provide them to our high-needs students. But, we are performing our MUCH HARDER jobs as special education teachers with none of these things, working out of other teachers' classrooms where we have no control, space, or say. AND, under these conditions, we're being forced to do a second job as general education teachers.

I'm being forced to try to establish consistency and control under another teacher's system (a teacher who knows nothing about special education), while running around like a chicken with my head cut off between classes and between special education/general education instruction.

Also, with inclusion, there is a big push to force all children into general education rooms, even when data has already been collected that they cannot be in general education rooms. This is DANGEROUS and can result in serious aggressive acts from students. Who takes the brunt of aggressive acts from IDEA students?--special education teachers. Last year, I was forced to have a student who didn't belong in the general ed classroom to remain in that inappropriate setting (in the name of inclusion) for months. He hadn't previously been violent, but after being in an inappropriate setting for so long, began having aggressive behaviors. No EA or general education teacher took that, I did. I was physically abused by that student all day long for three weeks before they would put him in an appropriate setting. I was scratched, kicked, hit, and spit on all day long. The student attempted to bite me countless times, and got two good bites on me. If I hadn't been wearing protective clothing and had training/experience with aggressive children, I definitely would have needed stitches. These are the kinds of things special education teachers take

regularly while doing their entire job as special education teachers AND the entire job of general education teachers under inclusion. And, we are expected to teach with the same competence as general education teachers while enduring this insanity.

Before this messy and incorrectly-handled switch to full inclusion, special education teachers already deserved $10,000 more than general education teachers because our jobs were already MUCH harder. Now, with inclusion which has turned special education into a s---show, special education teachers deserve twice as much. The abuse, mistreatment, and insanity we're taking, all while trying to do what we can for our students, is unacceptable. I highly doubt Hawaii will have any special education teachers left soon without a differential. You need to treat your employees well to keep them. And, trust me, you don't want public education without SPED teachers. You have no idea the miracles we make happen on a daily basis so that everyone else can function with ease.

Gmail

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

Going Back To School Too Soon

Liko Rogers <liko.rogers@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am an elementary teacher on Maui and I feel that returning to face to face instruction is not safe at his time. I do not believe the DOE has developed a solid coherent plan to keep students and staff at schools reasonably safe from contracting covid. It seems that each school has kind of been left to develop safety procedures on their own without enough proper guidance from health officials.

I believe we should be planning for distance learning until such time that the DOE can provide schools with a plan that leaves families, students and staff feeling that everything within reason has been done to protect them from contracting the virus.

Mahalo,

Liko Rogers

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Testimony

Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan <pfgalici@hawaii.edu> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, Phil Galicinao <phil@halaukumana.org>

Aloha kākou. My name is Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan. I grew up in Kāneʻohe but now I live in Mānoa, Oʻahu. I am a public school teacher and teach at Hālau Kū Māna PCS in Makiki and am a PhD student in education at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa. I urge the Hawaiʻi Board of Education members to reject the proposal to defer shortage differentials for hard to staff teaching positions in our public schools.

I am testifying on Action Item G:**Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I am not one of the recipients of the differentials but I understand the value and benefit collectively for our schools. If you stop these differentials there will be teachers leaving important positions, especially in hard to staff Special Education positions remain in your position, and how its retraction will negatively impact you and your students.

While a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets now, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students now and for many years to come. Teachers and education are usually the first public service that gets losses in funding. This needs to stop. Education must be a priority like many other countries.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Not only will teachers leave high needs positions, teachers will retire and leave the profession altogether as it can not sustain the cost of living in Hawaiʻi. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Mahalo,

Phillippe Rivera Fernandez-Brennan, M.Ed.
Student, PhD in Education: Curriculum and Instruction
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa
pfgalici@hawaii.edu
Kumu, Secondary Mathematics and Science
Hālau Kū Māna New Century Public Charter School
phil@halaukumana.org
https://www.donorschoose.org/KumuPhil

Testimony

Kenda Kauwe <kekauwe@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kenda Kauwe and I am a school counselor at Nanaikapono Elementary School in Nanakuli.

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My decision to stay at school this year was based largely on the belief that the shortage differential would not be impacted. My personal reasons for this include the fact that my family of 7 has been impacted by the pandemic and one of my children, who works for a hotel, has been indefinitely laid off. Additionally, I have 2 other young adult children who are attending college and living at home. Thus, the “extra” income is not merely a nice bonus, but is money that my family is counting on to make ends meet this year.

As a counselor in a high needs area, I fully expect and commit to providing service to my students and families that meets their particular needs. Because so many families I serve do not have the luxury of internet and home computers, my team and I did home visits throughout the shutdown and even to many families over the summer. This was, and will continue to be, a critical part of keeping them connected to school resources and providing education and other supports.

It happens that I am also a parent of a student who attends a well-known private school and I am very familiar with what is possible for families who have readily available home and school resources for virtual education. To illustrate, my son has a laptop from his school that he has been using for years and is very comfortable with. We also have high-speed internet and his teachers had a relatively easy transition to virtual classes because of these resources to which virtually all students had access. In fact, I would say that, despite the shutdown after Spring Break last school year, my son had a relatively uninterrupted 6th grade education.

So, I would ask you to compare my son’s experience to what could happen for students at more affluent public schools vs. the circumstances of most of my students at Nanaikapono Elementary. For me, it is a stark comparison. My families are not less concerned about their children’s education than I am about my son’s. They have significantly less resources, and will continue to, especially over the next year as this pandemic continues. Our school is less equipped than my son’s school to handle a transition to virtual learning or even a hybrid model. We are definitely working on establishing it, and I know many teachers and staff volunteering time to help make this happen. Nonetheless, it will require more work, not less, in order to get us where we need to be.

I do not consider myself to be some sort of mercenary, only willing to work if the pay is good enough. In a normal year, my colleagues and typically work 9-10 hour days as a matter of course—which is presumably why the differential occurred in the first place. In our current situation, I do think I need to be honest about the potential risk to myself and my family, since I know that I will be conducting home visits and have much more regular contact with students than in more affluent settings. As mentioned above, I also expect that I will be putting in even more hours, with my whole team, to help my school be able to support the education of our students in our area. The differential gave me significantly less to worry about. Without it, I am not sure that the risk and effort will be worth it for my family.

I also find it outrageous that this cut would be proposed after so many teachers have entered into the year with the understanding that it would not be jeopardized. I, like many other colleagues, have worked over the summer and have already started preparing for the upcoming year with this expectation. To withdraw the differential now is an underhanded maneuver. The ideal time for many of us to have looked at other options and really examined the impact of that lost income has past. I worry that we may lose teachers during the year now, which we only set us even further back and cause greater risk to everyone.

As this pandemic continues, and continues to hurt our most vulnerable populations the most, it is highly inappropriate to cut funding that is designed to improve the educational outcomes for these same populations, and has already been shown to be working!

Gmail

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

Testimony for July 23 BOE General Board Meeting

Ryan Washburn <ryan.washburn@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:23 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Ryan Washburn, I am a Special Education ELA teacher at Wai'anae High School. I am writing in regards to the July 23 BOE General Board Meeting agenda item G Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I write to you to oppose the motion to temporarily discontinue these pay differentials in the interest of our keiki, teachers, and the community at large.

The first and most important reason is that our keiki are hard to fill schools and special education deserve the best teachers and these differentials have been proven to be successful in retaining and attracting qualified teachers. I myself began last year without special education credentials or even a teaching license but was expected to develop and implement individualized education plans for 16 students without any prior knowledge of how to do so. While I did my best to support these students I was drastically underprepared for the challenge. This is an injustice to our most vulnerable keiki and one that will continue if these differentials are not continued.

Secondly, now is the time we should be most willing to compensate our teachers and those on the frontline of the coronavirus. Teachers are being asked to put themselves and their families at risk in going back to teach in the fall. This temporary suspension amounts to a paycut and a slap in the face to those risking their lives to support our keiki. This is an unfair stress to put on our teachers mere days before the start of the 2020-21 school year.

Lastly, this temporary suspension is taking money directly out of our communities. Those receiving this money are most likely to inject it right back into the economy supporting Hawaiian businesses, restaurants, and other institutions that employ Hawaiians. History has shown that it is never helpful to cut pay during a recession. As such, I implore you to do the right thing and maintain these differentials for our keiki, teachers, and the Hawaiian community.

Mahalo,

Ryan Washburn

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

No Cutting Of Pay Differentials

Liko Rogers <liko.rogers@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:25 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am writing to ask that you folks look into another solution to balance the department‘s budget rather than cutting the pay differentials that were implemented last school year. Please remember the reason the differentials were implemented in the first place and understand that the shortages in those hard to fill areas will only get worse if the differentials are taken away.

Mahalo,

Liko Rogers

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Testimony

Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan <pfgalici@hawaii.edu> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I received an email form Senator Mazie K. Hirono and she provided these grant opportunities for education that could fund our high need teachers and programs.

https://www.grants.gov

Department of Education

· **Department of Education-** ***OSERS-OSEP: Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities--Improving Retention of Special Education Teachers and Early Intervention Personnel CFDA Number 84.325P*** provides funding for programs that (1) help address State-identified needs for personnel preparation in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children, including infants and toddlers, and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically based research, to be successful in serving those children.

· **Department of Education-** ***Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE): FY 2020 Education Stabilization Fund: Reimagine Workforce Preparation (ESF-RWP) Grants Program CFDA Number 84.425G*** provides support to help States with the highest coronavirus[1] burden create or expand short-term education and training opportunities and/or or career pathways programs that help citizens return to work, become entrepreneurs, or expand their small businesses (as described under Absolute Priority 1); or to enable States to create or expand small business incubators that offer education and training, mentorship, as well as shared facilities and resources that will help small businesses recover and grow and new entrepreneurs thrive (as described under Absolute Priority 2).

Phillippe Rivera Fernandez-Brennan, M.Ed.
Student, PhD in Education: Curriculum and Instruction
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
pfgalici@hawaii.edu
Kumu, Secondary Mathematics and Science
Hālau Kū Māna New Century Public Charter School
phil@halaukumana.org
https://www.donorschoose.org/KumuPhil

Gmail

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

Pay Differentials for SPED Teachers

C. Grande <maisagrande@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

Even when there was no pandemic SPED (Special Education) teachers incurred many more hours of prep time and before and after school meeting times due to the nature of of the amount support a child who qualifies for IDEA requires. As a SPED teacher I am required to know THE Chronological Age - curriculum and assessments for each grade level of the students on your Caseload. This more than likely involves having to about curriculum and assessments for most often more than two grade levels. This is extremely time consuming as it sometimes requires training usually held for General Education teachers In addition each special education students or students who qualifies because of a learning disability requires an IEP plan, an individualized plan which requires determining learning problems then designing data keeping forms, interpretation of the data and utilizing that data in individualized plans. In addition to meeting with General Education Teachers we also have to meet with other Service Providers such as occupational therapist, speech therapist, psychologist, behavioral specialist, alternative learning center teachers and counselors and the list goes on. Then there are meetings to share information with the team. The team members presence is also managed by the SPED teacher, which requires assembling up at 5 to 6 People often not from the students campus. This is a very time consuming task which usually involves Teachers sped teachers working after hours utilizing their emails and cellular devices in order to connect with these team members and providers. Without utilizing after hours time it is very difficult to organize a team for a meeting due to the many parties involved.

I am and was eligible for retirement at this time and this time last year. Had I not received a differential for last year and for future employment as a Certified SPED TEACHER, I would have retired. Therefore, if our differentials are eliminated for the following school year (Sy21-22) I will definitely be retiring especially in light of our ever evolving list of duties due to the Pandemic. Due to the pandemic, the work of a SPED teacher is even more demanding since we are required to provide face-to-face learning without the support of proper face-to-face precautions(i.e plexiglass partitions) and Daily disposable Personal Protection.
Once again I would just like to reiterate, should an elimination of differential pay for Special Education teachers be eliminated you have my word I and many of my seasoned peers will retire.

Sincerely,
Charlene F. Grande

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:43 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

With the blended learning model, my students will be exposed to many other children on the three days they don't go to school. They will then bring this back to our school "bubble" on the two days that they come to school each week. Once parents start working, their children will mostly either be staying home by themselves on the three days off, or their parents will be forced to put them in other childcare/learning situations. These situations could change daily, exposing the kids to many other children also being watched. Then, on the two days they return to school, they are exposing the other children in their class, as well as teachers, and staff to possible cases of Coronavirus they picked up on the three days at various childcare facilities! My solution is bring all of my students back and we can keep the bubble intact the best we can, or don't start school until it is safer, just have distance learning for everyone. To me, blended learning is just as dangerous if not more dangerous than all of the students in class together. If you watch the video you will see that the DOH is not thinking about how these bubbles will be compromised due to childcare issues for working parents! Personally, I wonder where will I put my five and 11-year-old when I have to be at school five days a week? They will be off three days a week. The only solution I know of is someone who would monitor them and watch them as well as other kids. I cannot afford a private tutor, or even a cheaper solution with many kids. If I did go with the latter of the two, my children would be exposed to way more kids on their three days off. They would then bring that back to their class bubble and then to me. I would bring it to my class bubble, and on and on. But that's just my situation! There will be 23 other families exposing their kids on their three days off to different childcare situations and bringing that back to class. I think the Dept of Health's bubble idea only works if we all return to school 5 days a week. Then childcare wouldn't be an issue or a bubble breaker... yet this isn't possible because many are scared of 3 feet distancing versus 6 feet, and I get that and feel for their concerns as well! In addition,once tourism starts, I would say 80% of my students' parents work in the tourism industry and will be around scores of different tourists each day! How's that for a bubble? And now they are talking about cutting differential pay to teachers in hard to staff areas, Special Education teachers, and Hawaiian immersion teachers! Unbelievable! I hope you will help the keiki of our community, the teachers and staff, and the communities in all of the various Hawaiian islands by not rushing things. Please ensure our safety rather than open up too quickly. Please don't cut our pay or our differentials. We are already going to be working four times as hard! We are going to be at risk, and many of us don't even have anyone to watch our own children. Please help us! Our community cannot afford credentialed, good teachers leaving the workforce. Our keiki deserve better! Thank you for your time and consideration in reading this!

Mahalo Nui Loa,
Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Gmail

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

Pay cut

Brian Breeze <mauiboz@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

In my 20 years of teaching in Hawaii, I have taken an 8% and 5% pay cut. In addition to the high cost of living, if the BOE decides to cut my pay again, I really have no choice except to retire and seek employment elsewhere. Additional funding for hard to fill schools, Special Education teachers, and Hawaiian Immersion teachers are exceptional individuals who really benefited from the additional pay. Trust me when I say we are not in this for the money, so the additional pay really boosted morale. I ask you to continue funding these positions.

Respectfully,

Brian

Bratcher

SpEd

Teacher

Gmail

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

WE ARE NOT READY TO OPEN SCHOOLS

Julie ko <julieko6866@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 1:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I'm a teacher at an elementary school and I love my job. However, it's very scary to be opening our schools in 2 weeks. I'm sure you heard our senator's valid concerns and the questions they asked Kishimoto. I'm so glad that they asked her the hard questions and she was doing her best to provide lots of "fluff" and answer in a roundabout way. She NEVER gives a direct answer! I was also very disappointed that Kishimoto gave some false impressions.

1. When questioned about providing training to teachers and staff, she said many teachers participated. This is totally false! How can we have had any training when teachers are on summer break and have NOT been in school. She had a few voluntary sped. webinars but that is pretty much it. As a teacher, I don't know what I am supposed to do if one of my students tests positive for COVID? No training!
2. Parents didn't get any information regarding protocols or school procedures. Our school is rushing to get a parent handbook out and probably will be ready for first week of school. They should get it way before school opens so we can answer concerns or questions. Many parents don't even speak English so we have to make sure they understand their responsibilities. This takes time.
3. It is really frustrating when Kishimoto compares summer school hubs to regular school. I'm glad Senator Kim pointed out the difference. Having only 3 students versus having a class of 22 students. Having a total school population of 20 versus 700 students. These numbers are for blended schools. Schools are still in the planning stages. I received absolutely no training. We get some training the first 2 weeks of school then teachers need time to now adjust. We can't get trained, adjust, and teach all at the same time in just 2 weeks.
4. Dr. Andersen said that he is willing to bet that schools will have cases like he has no concern. It's okay because children are less likely to get it. I'm so sick and tired of hearing this like my life and my family's life is so trivial. Maybe if we planned better then we can reduce the likelihood of schools getting Covid. Like the senator said, what is the rush??? He hit it right on the nail!! Schools are rushing and because they are, they will make mistakes. I'm starting to set up my classroom but enrollment keeps changing so I have to redo things. Again, schools need more time. My classroom or school have any PPEs. I don't see any sanitizing stations around the school. If we have poor training then you will see poor results.
5. Dr. Green said publicly that we don't have enough contact tracers and Dr. Andersen is betting that schools will see positive cases. How does this make sense?
6. I've heard the BOE question DOE many times what's taking so long coming out with guidelines. Yes, they took very long! The schools are scrambling right now trying to meet Aug. 4th. We need to be mindful and collaborate with teachers and staff of protocols but because teachers are not there, we are not involved. Teachers will be returning back on July 29th. Then give the schools a month to plan collaboratively without the students.

Please listen to the Senators, teachers, and parents and push back the opening date. I don't understand what the rush is? Thank you for your time.

JKL (teacher and parent)

Testimony

SH 77 <silverhonu77@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:00 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

RE: Testimony on Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Dear Esteemed Board Members,

Aloha and thank you for your consideration. My name is Anjanette Naganuma, and I teach at Lahainaluna High School on Maui. I am also a parent; my son attends Princess Nahienaena Elementary School.

Please continue to support and fund the "extra" compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

Numerous studies show that Hawaii comes in dead-last when it comes to teacher salary relative to cost-of-living. Every year news articles are published about how Hawaii is hemorrhaging teachers and how positions go unfilled because we cannot afford to live here.

I love my school and my own students; I have been blessed to have dedicated teachers for my son. During the closing of campuses for Q4 last year, I was proud to see how well my colleagues and my son's teacher rose to this unprecedented occasion.

To discontinue the compensation, especially in these times and under these circumstances...

Our teachers and keiki already deserve more than this "extra" compensation, even in the best of situations, let alone during a pandemic where many teacher families are now faced with supporting a multi-generational household on a single teacher's salary.

Please continue to support and fund the pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

Mahalo,

Anjanette Naganuma
Lahaina, Maui

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

TESTIMONY - BOE Meeting July 23, 2020

Alicia Jacobson <asjmaui@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Kahou,

My name is Alicia Jacobson and I teach 4th grade at Haiku Elementary. I have been a teacher with HIDOE for over 20 years, and I have never been as concerned with the safety of returning to school as I am currently.

I do NOT support opening our public schools on August 4, 2020. The lack of planning and foresight on the part of the DOE is beyond my comprehension. I have been staying at home and practicing safe measures by wearing a mask in public and distancing. Now we are being asked to go back into a classroom with an undisclosed amount of students who have the choice to wear a mask with more cases of CORVID than when schools shut down and I was told not to come on campus. This is NOT safe.

Over the years, 95 degree classrooms, mold, 30+ students, and general disorganization on the part of administration have given me pause to consider leaving the teaching profession, but now with asthma and a husband aged 62, I honestly do not know what I will do. Everyday since June 1, I thought that some communication would occur on the part of the DOE. We need to survey parents, staff, and to get technology ready if moving forward with our plans. Teachers were given only a few days notice for a voluntary meeting to determine the design of our instructional week. We were given no other information. In fact, it was so poorly run, that as the HSTA rep, had to tell administration how to use the WebEx meeting features. Again, no training or leadership to help us in this time of such fear and uncertainty. The format of the meeting was not communicated and I had to quickly make a new Google Form to accommodate the new voting protocol. We were given two hours to come to a decision on the Model that our school would use. To me, it felt unorganized, rushed, and not in the best interest of staff working with students. I have spent countless hours on Google training and I am ready to do virtual or any tech that is necessary, but I did this on my own. Again, there was no guidance or leadership and most importantly, TEACHER VOICE.

At this point in my career and life, I have more education and years experience than most of my "leadership" team. The number of times people ask me to move into "resource" or "admin" is exhausting. Why do we have so many positions that do not work with students directly? We can solve the budget by keeping front line teachers and looking at our entire DOE structure with transparency.

In conclusion, there are many things that need to change, but the starting date of school is the most pressing currently as we are simply not ready. This is the full responsibility of 12 month personal. There should have been communication with parents and teachers and a plan should have been put in the works with community input since we left the campus on March 13.

Thank you for your time to read my position on this issue.

Alicia S. Jacobson

--

With warm aloha,
Alicia S. Jacobson

Gmail

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

Please continue to fund teacher shortage areas.

Stacie Friel <8companion@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi,
I am teacher and very much in favor of continued funding for teacher special shortages. Please continue this. It is a positive step.

It is necessary.

Thank you,
SFriel

Testimony

Rebecca C Spinner <RSpinner@live.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:09 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Aloha,

My name is Rebecca Spinner and I work at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary school. This year I will be the 6th grade teacher. Thank you for serving our students and school communities!!

I am writing to ask you to please not cut the shortage differentials for the upcoming school year. At this point, one week before our school year is set to begin, this decision is unconscionable. After earning my Master's degree and teaching for seven years in New York and Florida, I decided to move to Hawaii last year, after hearing about the state's shortage of qualified teachers. I absolutely love teaching my keiki, and am happy to be a part of this community. This past year was extremely challenging financially. Because our district is very rural, it was extremely challenging to find suitable housing that I could afford on my paycheck without the differential. I often went without sufficient groceries for the first few months of school, and moved three times by November before finally settling into the house I could afford without differentials. This plywood shack with only screens in the windows was almost an hour away from school, was remote so could not get internet, and did not have hot water, an oven, or a working shower. Just recently I was elated to sign a lease for a much more suitable living situation that is closer to school. It cuts my commute in half, but it is also more than twice as expensive as the house I lived in last year. If you decide to cut our differentials at the last minute, what am I supposed to do?? I cannot afford living here without that extra boost. I would get a second job but my new place is 1 1/2 hours away from both Hilo and Kona, and on top of that, there are already plenty of people trying to find work. Shouldn't teachers be paid enough to live with our basic needs being met? How is the decision to cut our pay at the last moment okay, after we have already committed to necessary living expenses? I honestly don't know what I will be able to do. We receive the pay differential because it is a necessity. Before the differential I was constantly struggling to have enough money for food, gas, and cell phone service. I am here to serve our keiki, a task I have dedicated my life's work to. Please support my fellow educators and I by giving us the money we were promised, and on which I based my financial decisions for this school year.

Mahalo,
Rebecca Spinner

Gmail

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

Protect your teachers please!

Dr. Phaedra Robinson <drphaedra@me.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov, "Sen. Michelle Kidani" <senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov>

Aloha. I am a school teacher in Kailua. I love my students. I miss them terribly. There is nothing more I'd rather do than teach- under normal circumstances. These are not normal circumstances. Not by any means.

I am at high risk for contracting the virus. I am a cancer survivor. I also have an autoimmune disease. It is not safe for me to teach in person for the position I was hired for- 1st grade teacher in a military base where many military & their family do not have to quarantine. Over the past 5 years I have been sick for months at a time just with the regular flu. So teaching in person is risky for me under normal circumstances.
However, now with the rising numbers of Covid cases in our state, all I can think of is how can I space the desks, how can I enforce masks, how can I keep the kids separated, how can I make sure I don't catch it from them? All my energy is going to be on how to try and act normal as I teach them from a six foot distance and assure they stay away from me and their peers- all while taking care of their social-emotional needs when I myself am not ok. I literally cannot think about how to meet their extensive needs when my singular focus is how can I not catch this virus and potentially die.
Given our current situation I could better serve the students through distance learning because I would not be teaching in fear EVERY DAY. At home teaching, as I did in quarter four I will be there for my students in a way that I cannot be if we open the schools amidst rising cases and lack of quarantine for military and their families.
Please please protect Hawaii's teachers, students and families. We must push back our start date for in person teaching and begin online the year where we can do it safely and take care of our own needs. Other states have done so already and they start later than we do.

I would like you not to share my name as I fear retaliation.

I plan to take leave if I am not able to teach online to protect myself and my family.

Thank you for supporting us. We need you to do what is right and treat your teachers with the aloha we deserve.
Please also keep the special ed and hard to fill differentials. Without these incentives we will loose many, many more teachers who will feel as I do, under-appreciated, expendable and not worth protecting in the face of this pandemic.

With sincere appreciation,
Phaedra Elisabeth Robinson, Ph.D.

Gmail

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

Differentials

Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen <tiffaniekspencer@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not take away teacher differentials. I am a teacher at a hard to staff school and the extra money helps me to provide a little bit more for my family and for my students. As you may know lots of students who attend hard to staff schools come from low-income families. And I use some of my own money to provide for my students. Please don't take this away from me, my family, and my students!

Mahalo
Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen
Makaha Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony for SPED differentials

Danielle Hartwick <daniurban@hotmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:21 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am a SPED preschool teacher working with a DOE collaborative at Makawao Elementary School. I am writing you to urge you to continue the pay differential for SPED teachers. This pay difference was initiated as an incentive to keep SPED teachers and to attract new SPED teachers in our current shortage. This pay increase was the first time I felt valued in my role.
During school closure for COVID-19, general education teachers were asked to provide enrichment activities to students without any grading requirements. There was no guidance to how often teachers needed to reach out to families, offer virtual learning or document parent contact and therefore, I experienced varied amounts of workload with the general education teachers depending on their personal motivation. Alternatively, SPED teachers were required to offer weekly activities (paper and/or virtual learning) to support student IEP goals, offer accommodations of general education activities for students to access general education, contact families weekly, document related student activities and parent contacts weekly, continue collaborative conversations with additional service providers to support students and families(and document those as well) and finally, rate and provide IEP progress notes at the end of the school year. This work was in addition to our requirements to write and provide annual IEPs and create and lead IEP meetings through the WebEX platform. If my families requested paper copies of IEPs, I used my personal printer and supplies to mail them from my home. Many SPED teachers had to learn new technology such as WebEx, Google Classroom, ClassDojo (often self-taught) to reach our families and students since most of our services are provided face to face during a regular school day. The SPED stipend offset my personal frustrations that I was being asked to complete more tasks than my co-workers to protect the State from potential litigation. I understand we need to address budget shortfalls due to COVID-19, however, if you remove the SPED differential, you may find yourself paying more money in litigation costs as SPED teachers will feel less valued and therefore, may put less effort into their work. We will continue to have SPED teacher shortages. This will have detrimental effects to our vulnerable SPED population and to the State. I urge you to continue to show SPED teachers their work is valuable and appreciated so we continue to support our keiki and the state of Hawaii.
Mahalo, Danielle Hartwick

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Keep our differential

Derek & Beth Young <derekbeth808@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sending in my testimony to keep the differential for sped teaches as well as Hawaii immersion teachers and hard to staff schools. This is such a trying year and taking money from the teachers in those very difficult positions is just cruel and unjust. Take from somewhere else please.

Beth Young

Gmail

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

Shortage Differentials to Continue for Teachers

Terri and Anthony Smith <ipkbhawaii@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 2:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not discontinue or suspend the funding for teacher shortage differentials. Doing so would negatively impact my family in so many ways. My family and I rely on the income I receive to eat, provide shelter, and cover basic living expenses. Discontinuing this would create an undue hardship for me and my family. Teaching is a profession that I chose to help children with disabilities learn skills to be contributing members of society and improve their quality of life. I believe our profession is underpaid and we deserve to be fairly compensated for teaching.

Aloha,
Terri Smith
Special Education Teacher
Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School

Gmail

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

Discontinuance of Differentials

sheryl O <petmongoose@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,
I am Sheryl Ogawa, a 28+ year teacher at Pahoa High & Intermediate School, where for the past three years (that I can remember) we have had a number of emergency hires teaching core classes, as well as electives such as Auto Shop Stuff (I'm an ELA teacher).

The hard-to-fill differential is essential to continue to attract teachers to our school. Do not renege on this promise. On the other hand, $10K for SpEd teachers was mind blowing - that's a lot of money! Maybe that can be cut back 50%, or they can have one differential and not two if they are in a hard-to-fill school, while teaching SpEd. The bottom line is, it was promised, and it should not be changed. I understand the Covid expenses, and how it is affecting the whole State of Hawaii, but please try to keep the differentials, and if need be, focus on lowering the amount slightly rather than cutting it totally and then bringing it back up to the negotiated amount when the economy has recovered and make it retroactive.

Mahalo,
Sheryl Ogawa
Gen Ed ELA Teacher

Sent through 'ope'ape'a express

July 18, 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 the behalf of the teachers who are concerned about returning back to school. We are questioning, "Is the state really ready to safely reopen buildings to students while providing adequate and quality distance learning?"

We have not had enough time to really discuss the issues of what's ahead. We were only given less than a week to vote on a model that we felt we could live with. We've put years of our lives dedicating our time to our students and their families, but got only a week to put ourselves and our students' lives at risk. How is that fair?

In the news recently, we have been seeing an increase in numbers of Covid in the State of Hawaii. Particularly on Oahu. Oahu is our hub. This is where most of the money exchanges are going on, people meeting face to face, and travellers coming in from out of state on flights. This is not counting the planned reopening of our state in the next two months. This really frightens me.I am a grandmother of 4 beautiful grandchildren, one who will be entering the third grade next year. I am absolutely worried for him. How am I supposed to feel?

Now we have a president that's forcing schools to reopen and threatening to withhold federal monies to schools that don't open, and with this we are still hearing about pay cuts. This is just too much!

I know parents need to go back to work. I know how difficult of a decision that is to make. I have been a single parent for 18 years, but is putting our keiki in harm's way the right thing to do? They are our future!

Could we please start off the school year virtually and make major decisions along the way?

Please keep our keiki safe and our teachers safe too. We are loved and wanted by our families.

Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedules to read my testimony.

Much Aloha,

Lisa Yamada
Wailuku Elementary School- 4th grade teacher

Gmail

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

Reject Proposal to Remove Differential for Sp Ed Teachers

Denise Roberts <topazcayenne@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I will quit and not sign contract without differential pay.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony against Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education

Derek Bishop <derek.bishop@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony against Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Derek Bishop. I am a 30-year special education teacher veteran at Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School on the Big Island. I am submitting testimony against Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I wish to thank the Board of Education for its initial support of these much-needed stipends. It is my hope that the BOE, working with the State Legislature and Governor, will find ways to avoid pay cuts, furloughs, and the like that will have an adverse impact on both our keiki and the State's economy.

I taught in the islands from 1990 to 2005. After teaching in California the following 15 years, I decided to return to Hawaii this past January when I learned of the special education and hard-to-staff stipends being offered. If these retention stipends are removed, I will be at breakeven financially, with little hope of saving money for a rainy day, let alone home ownership. If these stipends are suspended, or Governor Ige follows through on possible across the board pay cuts for State employees, I will be forced to consider strongly a return to California to pursue the remainder of my career. Even with the stipends and a fully funded Hawaii salary, I took a $20,000 pay cut to assume a teaching position in Hawaii. But I thought that the loss of income was doable, and that there would be an overall net gain to my quality of life by returning to Hawaii.

If teachers are unable to afford their most basic expenses, they will necessarily have to look at their options. Other careers, and teaching in other states, will have to be on the table. Hawaii already has a critical teacher shortage. It is hard to build a school culture when classrooms have inexperienced teachers or emergency hires who lack adequate training. Our children suffer for lack of consistency and instructional expertise. Finding ways to retain teachers, especially through financial incentives, is one proven method to improve educational outcomes for students.

I know that the State is under unprecedented pressure financially. I am not sure what is the best path forward. I had hoped that Federal CARES Act moneys would solve this particular problem. I understand that Hawaii's education stakeholders must balance their many financial obligations. However, I am a real data point in the equation, and it is likely that the withholding of stipends and further pay cuts would drive me to return to teaching on the mainland, causing more classroom shortfalls that undermine learning opportunities for our keiki. I wish you the very best in solving the very difficult problems faced by the Aloha State.

Mahalo,

Derek Bishop, Hawaii District, Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School

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Gmail

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

Testimony for 7/23 meeting

Mike Landes <jmlandes@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board members,

My name is Mike Landes, I am a social studies teacher at Lahainaluna High School on Maui, and I am also a parent of two public school students who attend Lahaina Intermediate School and Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School. I write to you today to testify about two items you will be discussing at your July 23 meeting: the MOU to guide the reopening of our schools, and the proposal to cut supplemental pay differentials for teachers in statistically hard-to-fill positions.

Regarding the MOU and the reopening of our schools.... I am extremely happy that you saw fit to direct the superintendent to rectify her misunderstanding of the legal agreement she negotiated, to sit back down at the bargaining table with HSTA, and to report back to you now before you approve the MOU. I am also happy that the superintendent followed your directions, and that the subsequent agreement solidifies that 6 foot distancing as the standard to be followed in all classrooms, with an exceptions having to be approved by both the DOE and HSTA, and with teachers having the authority to mandate mask-wearing in their classrooms. However, I am personally concerned as the COVID pandemic continues to get worse across the mainland and even here in our state, which had been doing so well. The growing number of cases here in Hawaii, despite the community efforts to stay within our "bubbles", indicates that it is not safe to attempt a return to normalcy right now. I love my students, and I miss them terribly...but I would miss them even more terribly if they got sick and died. I love teaching in-person, and I recognize the crucial social interaction we get by being in our classrooms...but I would rather teach my students virtually if that meant they stayed safe, healthy, and alive. I love my own children, and I struggle with the knowledge that they are missing out on so many "typical" childhood experiences by having to isolate and practice physical distancing...but I recognize these are not "typical" times, and I absolutely need my children to survive this pandemic. Personally, I do not feel it is safe for schools to re-open for any type of in-person instruction at this time. Please, accept the MOU, and further direct the DOE to move forward with a 100% distance learning plan that will allow us teachers to teach our students during the normally scheduled school year, without jeopardizing our lives or the lives of our students, our children, and the community at large. Perhaps this 100% distance learning plan would only be for the first quarter or the first semester, with the possibility of a return to in-person instruction if the pandemic subsides later in the school year.

Regarding the proposed cut to pay differentials.... I fully recognize that we are in dire economic times...but austerity measures only make economic downturns worse. When you studied history in school, whose plan do you remember learning about that helped us get through the Great Depression? Herbert Hoover or Franklin Delano Roosevelt? My students learn about FDR, and how his New Deal programs increased spending for public works and public employees to stimulate the economy. It's the basic theory behind Keynesian economics, and it also happens to be the very thing that helped us to survive the Great Recession in our lifetimes. We already face a severe teacher shortage every year, and earlier this year, the superintendent and this Board supported the idea of increasing pay for teachers in statistically hard-to-fill positions (that's special education, Hawaiian immersion, and geographically hard-to-staff locations). As someone who teaches in one of those geographically hard-to-staff locations, I can tell you firsthand the effect these differentials have had for myself, my family, and my co-workers. For the first time in my 16 years at Lahainaluna, I heard from teachers in other parts of the state who wanted to come teach in West Maui, I heard from colleagues at my school who no longer had to debate whether or not to leave West Maui so they could survive economically, and I heard from more veteran colleagues who said they will now delay retirement and will continue to use their experience and expertise to help guide their students and our school. Cutting those differentials, when those very differentials have convinced teachers to upend their lives to move to West Maui, or cancel plans to leave, or decide to delay retirement, would be a personal betrayal to those teachers. It would be a pay cut to those teachers, and to my family, making it less likely that any of us can continue to survive here, despite our best efforts. And in a time like this, when we know people are already leaving for health and safety reasons, it would add an economic reason to leave as well. Please, do not cut the differentials, and do not approve any proposals to cut our pay at all. How can we pay the rent, help local businesses, and try to boost our islands' economy if we have no money. Economic austerity measures make hard times worse. Please don't throw gasoline on the fire by cutting our pay.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Mike Landes
Kiehi, Maui

Testimony

Krisdee V. <krisdeevangieson@live.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:54 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a certified special education, middle school teacher at Kailua Intermediate School. I am writing to testify against the proposed Action Item G to temporarily discontinue the special education pay differential. We have all faced unprecedented challenges during this pandemic. What hasn't changed during these times is my unwavering dedication to my students and their families as a special education teacher. The field of special education is challenging as is. I would have never imagined it was going to as challenging as it has been during this pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, I work extended hours and go above and beyond, like many of my colleagues, to support my students' needs. During the pandemic, the demands of special education teachers grew exponentially with additional care coordination, documentation, modification, and accommodations to address our students and their families' heightened needs. The intensity and demands of special education will increase as we navigate through uncharted waters with the re-opening of schools. Highly qualified special education teachers are a vital component to ensuring our students are receiving the adequate supports and services they are entitled to under IDEA.

The field of special education is hard to staff as is. Discontinuing the pay differential will increase the special education teacher shortage and these positions will either be left vacant or filled with under-qualified staff which will put our high needs students at a further disadvantage. If the differential is discontinued, I will resign as a certified special education teacher because the demands and intensity of the field outweigh the already underpaid funding received as a teacher in the state of Hawaii.

Mahalo for considering the negative impacts this discontinuation will have on our already under-staff field and students with higher needs.

Gmail

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

Please Support Pay Differentials

Andrea <lexia99@aol.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:55 PM
Reply-To: Andrea <lexia99@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

We are already losing qualified teachers, we need to keep these in place to keep qualified teachers.
Thank you,
Andrea Baer

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shannon Jacob Kline <shannon.jacob_kline@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 3:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing regarding Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

While I completely understand the dire financial situation Hawai‘i faces due to the global pandemic shattering our economy, now is not the time to worry about balancing budgets. If we are to come out of this situation stronger, we need to effectively educate our keiki to prepare them for the unforeseeable challenges they will face to clean up the messes the current generation has created. We cannot do this unless teaching positions are staffed with qualified teachers, which will not happen if teacher's wages don't remain somewhat competitive.

Teachers in this state already struggle to make ends meet in one of the most expensive places in the country to live; removing this compensation will be a devastating blow to many households who may be depending on a teacher salary as the sole income due to COVID 19-induced layoffs. It is imperative that teachers are fairly compensated, especially those who teach students with special needs and had to quickly pivot to on-line instruction. To cut their pay now would be egregious at best and cruel at worst.

Though Hawai‘i does have a legal commitment to balancing its budget, this is a crisis that will take creativity to ameliorate for the denizens of Hawai‘i. I sincerely hope it will not come at the expense of the education of our youth.

Regards,
Shannon Jacob Kline
National Board Certified
English Teacher
Konawaena High School

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

Testimony

Linda Sorenson <lindasorenson62@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action G

While we face tough economic times, it still is imperative that the special education differentials. Special education differentials have been beneficial in retaining special education teachers as well as attracting formal special education teachers back in the field. It would almost seem like a cruel joke to take away the differential when many teachers transferred to special education for that very reason. Additionally, as schools transition to distance learning, the job of a special education teacher becomes even more difficult. Many special education teachers in high school and middle school teach more than one subject. Planning and implementing distance learning for distance learning is an overwhelming task. Doing it for multiple subjects is utterly daunting. On top of that, we will have to closely monitor our students progress from a distance, which will be complicated to say the least.

I am asking that the differentials continue so that teachers continue to stay in special ed. and others are attracted to the field.

Sincerely,
Linda Sorenson
Special education teacher at Kalama Intermediate
Inclusion social studies teacher and resource language arts
Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Differential Testimony

Cindy Martin <cinm1970@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:15 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,

I would like to say thank you to the board members for hearing our testimony.
My name is Cindy Martin and I am a special education teacher for grades 5th-8th at Waikoloa Elementary School on the Island of Hawaii. I am speaking in opposition to item G on the agenda. As most of you know Hawaii has some very rural locations. Waikoloa is a small town in between the larger towns of Kona and Waimea. Although Waimea is not much bigger. Waikoloa was first built for people who worked at the resorts 15 minutes away. It is very small. It is really one big street with a few offshoots. We have one grocery store, one post office and one gas station. The closest, Costco, Walmart and Target are a 40-50 minute drive away. Now remember these are times without road construction or an accident as there is only one road in and out. The reason you approved the differentials is because these are hard to staff areas. The reason they are hard to staff is because most of them are very rural and not many people are willing to sacrifice the convenience of living in an urban area or the long drive to get to and from work each day. That doesn't make the students at our school any less worthy of certified teachers. The differentials help to offset the cost of living in a rural area or driving into a rural area to teach. This has made our area more appealing to teachers and has brought us many more applicants to our job postings. So yes indeed it has made a major difference for our rural schools. If you discontinue the differentials the teachers that were recruited for our openings will leave the coming school year. Thus, putting us back into the undesirable position to hire long term subs, uncertified teachers, and even worse of all VACANT positions.

I would also like to touch on the need for the special education differential. As many of you know our most vulnerable students are those with disabilities.They come with a wide variety of needs from just struggling in one area to not even being able to feed themselves. Special education teachers are asked to do what many will not. We work with the most challenging students where others have given up. We have students that are nonverbal, wear diapers, throw tantrums, hit and run from us, most times without prior warning. We work very hard to keep regular routines for these students. These students are the most difficult to work with and that is why many special education teachers leave the field. Since the differentials went into place we have had quality applicants apply for our special education positions as well as teachers wanting to STAY in their positions. If you discontinue the differential for special education we will have a mass exodus of teachers from special education classrooms and we already have a heavy turnover at our school already. Three to four special education teachers a year are moving back to the mainland or taking general education jobs. Let's face it the general education population is much easier to teach than the one that comes with special needs. Remember these are our most vulnerable students. They demand a higher level of attention and are the most difficult to educate. The differential has demonstrated what it was intended to do. To get and keep more qualified teachers for our most vulnerable population. I implore you to oppose the discontinuation of the differentials.

Sincerely,
Cindy Martin

Gmail

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

Differentials

Carol DeForest <deforestcarol@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha All,
Our students deserve a stable consistent teaching staff. Too long have teachers come and go, especially in shortage areas. These times compel more and more teachers to return to the mainland where cost of living is affordable. Do Not short change our students and dedicated teachers by removing the pay differential. Make the right choice, pay our shortage area teachers and help our students!
Mahalo,
Carol DeForest

Gmail

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

Testimony

Vanessa Ince <vanessaince@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:33 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha
I have read your letter regarding Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for classroom teachers in Special Education, Hard to Staff Geographical areas, and Hawaiian Immersion programs.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile to consider how DOE Adminstrations' actions have led to so many needless Due Process lawsuits, which have wasted MILLIONS of dollars that could have been used to pay teachers and develop programs instead?

Vanessa Ince
currently in our daughters, FOURTH Due process lawsuit against the DOE, and she is only 10.

Gmail

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

KEEP THE DIFFERENTIAL FOR TEACHERS!!!

(Kalelani Ogata) <kaleko76@aol.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:43 PM
Reply-To: "(Kalelani Ogata)" <kaleko76@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOE

RE: Teacher Differentials for shortage areas: SPED, Hawaiian Immersion, Hard to staff areas

THURSDAY, July 23, 2020

1:30 p.m.

Dear Board of Education,

I am back here again providing my testimony on a topic that I happily and thankfully thought was resolved. When both the BOE and DOE came together to provide differentials for the teacher shortage areas (SPED, Hawaiian Immersion, Hard to staff areas) I finally felt that I, as a special education preschool teacher for over 20 years, was being looked at as the professional I am and was ecstatic that I would receive the pay I deserved for the service I provide. At the time I provided my reasoning why the differential was so important - please see below for my original testimony as I do not have the time nor the will to rewrite it. I am too busy planning (during my summer break) for the opening of a school year that I have no idea what will entail and what will be asked of me. I have to prep for both in person and distance learning (with no guidance or training but what I've learned "on the job."). **Bottom line, the differential is needed now more than ever.** Do not renege on your promise to support us. You have the funding. Use it on your teachers. I passed up on another job that would have paid me a lot more because I was promised the differential. I have a family to support, kids in college, and bills to pay. I am very blessed to have a job during this time but that does not mean I want to be sold short either. Please continue to support teachers, especially through these times. By not supporting us you WILL lose us. I will not pass up another job again if this differential is taken away.

Thank you for your time.

Kalelani Ogata

Lincoln Elementary, Preschool Special Education Teacher

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 2488 Proposed SD1, RELATING TO TEACHER COMPENSATION

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020

2:45 p.m.

Chair Kidani and members of the Education Committee:

My name is Kalelani Ogata. I am a teacher at Lincoln Elementary in Honolulu District on ‘Oahu. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 2488, proposed SD1.

Please provide enough funds to fix the teacher salary compression issue, and provide funding for the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard to staff positions to show that we as a state value our hardworking teachers. The Department of Education will need $45 million more than this bill provides to do so. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki.

If there was ever such a thing as a super power then I have found mine. I have been teaching for 20 years and am a preschool special education teacher (certified Special Education PK-12 and certified Regular Education K-6). I have been in the preschool special education position for 19 years. I love what I do! I am great at what I do! It is my calling. But as a super hero is only as strong/successful as those who believe in them and support them, I would not have been able to teach for this long if I didn’t have the support from my sidekick – my husband. If I had to survive on my salary alone and pay the bills and support my family (husband and 2 kids) I would not have been teaching for this long. My teaching salary has been my kryptonite. Like Superman, who doesn’t get a pay check, I do it for the love.

Enough is enough! I am one of the veteran teachers affected by both the special education differential and the salary compression. Since I began teaching, I have been sharing my concerns with HSTA about the need for special education differential pay. I also never agreed with, and never voted for, the contracts that halted the step increases and created the salary compression. I don’t understand how automatic step increases could have been on the bargaining table in the first place. What company does not reward years of service and their employees who have seniority? Salary compression never should have happened. When it did I was very upset to know that new incoming teachers were getting paid the same salary as myself when I had 10 years of service under my belt. It felt that the time and dedication I put into teaching (prepping, planning, taking additional classes out of pocket, PD credits out of pocket, on-the-job experience, etc.) meant nothing. Despite my concerns about a sped differential not being heard and the compression happening anyway I stuck it out in teaching. I love what I do, I do it well, and I have helped hundreds of kids…given them confidence in their abilities and instilled in them a love for learning. Teaching special education preschool is not easy. As in all special education classes you are not just dealing with the academics but the whole child, including negative behaviors which can be very volatile even at the preschool level. I have had my share of bites, scratches, punches, kicks, and sprained fingers. I chose to continue teaching for the students’ sake but at the same time I was giving up a lot because my salary wasn’t where it should be. I have a family to support and bills to pay. The bills keep getting bigger but not my salary. I have one child in college and another soon to be. I don’t make enough money to pay for college but I make just enough to be turned down for financial aid. It is an uphill battle. And let’s be honest, I spend a lot of my own money on classroom supplies and activities because I have to in order to provide the level of education my students need and deserve. Funds need to be provided to fix the teacher salary compression issue and to support the pay differentials.

Special education as a whole is NOT getting easier. Ask any sped teacher who has taught as long as I have. There are more demands from district, more paperwork to complete to get the services my students need, more meetings to hold and attend to address student needs. And the students who are entering school now have needs that are more

demanding and involved than those in the past yet as a sped teacher I am expected to meet all of their needs without the appropriate staff or support and without the appropriate pay. I fortunately have 20 years of teaching under my belt to support me but despite that, before it was announced that special education teachers would be getting a pay differential, I was researching to change my career. Why should I stay in a job that doesn't pay me for what I am worth, for the work that I do, and for all that is expected of me? This does not support teachers as the professionals we are. I love teaching kids which is what makes me love my job but with all of the demands placed on teachers, and added demands for special education teachers, it was no longer worth continuing. The announcement of a special education differential pay couldn't have come at a better time. It made me pause and decide to stay in teaching. Addressing the salary compression issue is just the right thing to do. The step increases should have been automatic and not up for bargaining. It is time teachers are paid what they deserve.

You have many super heroes teaching Hawaii's keiki every day. Please support all of us by highlighting us as the professionals we are through the pay we deserve. I'd like to say thank you for hearing my story as well as many others like mine and for showing teachers that they matter and they are worth the pay by putting words into action and compensating teachers with what they deserve.

Mahalo,

Kalelani Ogata

Preschool Special Education Teacher, 20 years of service

Honolulu, ʻOahu

Gmail

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

Testimony

arose46054@aol.com <arose46054@aol.com>
Reply-To: arose46054@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:44 PM

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Abigail Rose and I am an educator in Hawai‘i at Ilima Intermediate School in Ewa Beach. I have taught in schools O‘ahu for over 10 years and have seen the delays ad inadequate service provision due to Hawai‘i continuing difficulty in hiring teachers in Special Education and is outlying areas such as West O‘ahu. In spite of data showing these differentials to be highly effective the state plans to cut back the pay of some 4000 teachers! Since implementing the differentials the number of teachers leaving special education positions decreased by 57 percent and the new transfers into special education increase to 29%. It is logical to expect to be paid extra money for the extra work entailed in Special education. In addition, the number of transfers into hard to staff schools has practically doubled.

The district is going back on it‘s promise to teachers. On Dec. 5, Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii’s critical teacher shortage and the BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials in three areas with the worst shortages. While I recognize the financial situation the district is facing, I feel that the brunt of the funding should not come from schools. I am sure there are other areas where savings could be found.

It is short sighted to believe that this will not lead to further teacher shortages in the future. As it is many teachers are choosing to retire early or leave the profession. Cutting the differential pay may just be the last straw for many teachers.

Our children should be the first priority, yet they will be the ones to suffer if the teacher shortage worsens.

I hope you will reconsider this proposal and think about the long-term effects of education for our Keoki!

Abigail Rose

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

Hawaii differentials testimony

Joshua Blaha <joshua.blaha@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 4:59 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha my name is Josh Blaha, I am a highly qualified SPED teacher in Lahaina, Maui at Lahaina Intermediate School. My first career was as a nightclub manager in Las Vegas for 12 years, I earned bachelors degrees in Psychology and Sociology with a minor in English previous to that at Western State University while playing college football and having a job on top of that. I was still hired as an emergency hire based on the fact I did not have a teaching credential despite my multiple bachelor degrees and ended up paying $5,000 while working for unsurvivable pay in order to get my teaching credential from iTeach in a one and a half year period. I tapped our savings to do this because I had faith and wanted to be a teacher in order to make Hawaii's school system stronger and give back to the community I live in. My wife and I finally were able to start saving again and not tapping our savings once I received my teaching credential and the differentials for hard to staff and SPED. It allowed us to get approved to buy a condo (a house in Lahaina was still too expensive and above our approved amount) and own a little slice of heaven here so we can try to start a family. My wife works 2 jobs as do I just in order for us to pay our bills, get approved and pay our mortgage. My wife lost all her hours at both jobs and was forced to claim unemployment. I am currently working ESY at Kam III (I do this as an additional side job to my 2 jobs to ensure we can pay our bills and afford things) and do this on all of the breaks from the regular school year. The cut in pay differentials could force my wife and I to lose our condo and not be able to pay our mortgage. We are not the people that go and buy brand new cars, we know how to manage our money. We have a financial planner and paid off both our vehicles previously to moving here and have no negative reoccurring debt on a monthly basis. That being said we are still in a really tough predicament here with having to consider moving because of our inability to afford to live here and pay our mortgage based on the pay cuts and my wife losing all her hours at both jobs. I beg and plead with you to look at the data and realize the sped and hard to staff differentials have and do work and to continue to pay them so honest, tax paying, hard working couples like ourselves can continue to pay our mortgage and service our community and Keiki. I feel that based on history repeating itself if you don't continue to pay the differentials another billion dollar lawsuit could be looming on the state for non compliance of SPED standards and could end up costing the state much more than the differentials. Please help us to stay in this state and beautiful place so we can continue to service and take care of our students (sons and daughters) and give back to our community we have become such a strong part of here in Lahaina. Thanks for your time and attention to this during these tough times and uncharted waters we are all in as a state, country and world.

Mahalo,

Josh Blaha

Mahalo,

Josh Blaha

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Gmail

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

Schools are not safe to reopen

Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 5:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I would like to share with you my trepidation in returning to the classroom in a week. I do not want to go back yet, I do not believe it is safe for me, my child, my family or my students. The more information that is researched, the more it becomes clear that mass gatherings such as schools and churches are the contact points that are most prolific for the virus. Children, young adults and adults all get the disease and pass the disease, so why are we pretending that this is not the case and endangering our community's wellbeing? We know the cases will spike in our community when school starts, everyone is aware of this, so what is the point? Why are we not focusing on our health, why does everything have to become an argument about the economy.

I live in a multigenerational household. My parents are in their 70's, my daughter is 10. If we go back to school we are basically deciding that we will have to physically distance from people in our home, our loved ones, for what gain? I am being asked to put my entire family at risk when the families I teach are not having the same respect for me, they don't want to wear masks and my school director is already asking me if we really need to stay 6 feet apart, we haven't even started yet.

I am overweight, obese in medical terms (I have been intermittent fasting since May to try and fight this), and I have asthma, I don't want to die to teach my students, I love them but that is asking too much. I feel stuck because if I quit then I lose my health insurance but if I stay I could die, or my daughter or I could bring home the virus to my parents or my husband. What am I supposed to tell my 10 year old? Wear your mask all the time in school even though the rest of your class is not because if you don't you could kill mommy or grandma or grandpa? Even if we do we could still end up bringing it home on our stuff. Pretty messed up! And on top of that I am supposed to bury those feelings so that I can appear positive for my students next week.

I had the talk with my daughter today that if we return to school we will have to cut off playing with and being around grandma and grandpa. This is shit, I hate it, I don't want to be forced to pick between my family's heath and teaching. I am so upset I can't sleep. Please help, please recommend that schools remain closed.

My families health and well being are directly affected by the policies you back. Please back extending distance learning until this virus is under control, I implore you.

Mahalo
Rachel Silverman
Science Teacher
Kailua Kona Resident

Sent from my iPhone

Pay

Jeanette Crane <jec1959@icloud.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 5:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

“Teaching attracts those who want to make a difference, change lives, and be a part of making the world better. The trouble is that the reality of teaching comes with a lot of unpleasant truths that we might not have seen before we joined the teaching program.

Districts are asking more and more of teachers as they are told to incorporate this and that into the already crammed curriculum. Kids’ attention spans are getting shorter, so every lesson needs to be flashy and fun. Parents expect you to bring the best out of their kids, but very few are willing to enforce homework, completing assignments or supporting the teacher’s discipline methods when needed.

It isn’t surprising to me that many teachers burn out. As they do, districts see their seasoned teachers make the hard decision to leave. To go to a job possibly less fulfilling, but with more consistent hours, and with less parents and demands. A job where bathroom trips and mental breaks are at your chosen discretion, not when the bell rings.

But thankfully a bunch of new eager (naive) teachers will soon be there to fill the gaps, right?

Wrong.

Since 2010, the number of Americans training to be teachers has dropped by a third.

Word has apparently gotten out about just how hard teaching has become these days, and more young college students are avoiding being fooled into training for a job that they will leave quickly after starting.

Couple the poor pay and lack of supplies with all of the work environment problems, and it doesn’t appeal to the millennial who wants to have flexible hours and more say over the choices in their work life than any district gives their teachers. “
Age of Awareness

Hawaii’s teachers are some of the best in the nation. However, the high cost of living and the lack of support is forcing many to return to other areas of the country where the pay is higher than here with a lower cost of living. Yes, Hawaii is paradise and we are fortunate to be here. A cut of the differentials for those of us who did qualify for it is indicative of a lack of respect for those that earn them by their willingness to fill positions in areas that are hard to fill will further diminish the numbers in the pool of applicants. It will indicate that the services provided to date have been for naught. Most of Hawaii’s teachers paid to provide services from home and had to purchase curriculum from their own pocket. We paid for internet at home so that we could provide distance learning opportunities with no assistance from the district. We further printed materials from printers at home. We mailed packets to parents with no reimbursement. We drove to multiple addresses to deliver packets and supplies to the families. I donated my last personal iPad to a student who had no hope of getting technology in his home because the parent had been let go. We gave it our all and then some.
These things were done because we love our students and want to be there for them when we can’t be in the classroom. It is not done for accolades or awards. At present, even with assurances that we will be going back to school with the supplies and PPE will be provided for us this year, we are aware that this will not always be done. We will be cleaning, providing supplies for students and classrooms, and maintaining quality and effective educational opportunities

for each one. Without the differential pay I will not be able to afford to do this. I signed a contract which included the pay differential. How can the district not acknowledge and honor this? The message is “Your services are not worth the money”.

Reconsider your stance on this issue. Teachers are just as important as the students and should be compensated justly.

Thank you,

J. Crane

from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

m satta.ellis <msattaellis@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 5:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Molly Satta-Ellis
Konawaena High School
Social Studies Teacher, 20+year
("hard-to-staff" geographical location)

A temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for me will be a financial blow. As a public servant or educator for the state of Hawai'i for the last 20+ year, I have been through so much in regards to not getting what I deserve. I walked the picket lines a little over 8 months pregnant with swollen feet in 2001, I endured furlough Friday's with that 2001 baby along with his older brother, pay cuts and still awaiting compensation from compression. Now, this? To ask us to literally risk our life in the public school setting during this time of uncertainty and anxiety by re opening schools and say we can't compensate you as well? Auwe. Data shows an increase in retention and recruiting for these hard-to-staff areas and now with the transfer period over, you are going to say we can't uphold our promise of paying the extra compensation. That is absolutely not pono. The state has been balancing the budget on teacher's backs for too long. Now the state is hurting every generation of teachers not just mine. Listen to your teachers, this is not right, do not vote on a temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mahalo.

Gmail

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

sped differential and hard to fill funding

Lane Yanagisawa <lyanagisawa61@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 5:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I've been teaching special education for the last 30+ years in Hamakua Complex and have worked hard at keeping kids safe while trying to keep their futures away from harships in life: drugs, teen pregnancy and the like.

I have felt constantly betrayed by the state for strike(2001), furloughs and who knows what is coming next.

I have remained in the classroom during my entire career thinking; if i leave, who will take my place?

I have no regrets in my career and each time i see a former student now in their 40's; they still give me a hug while introducing me to their families. This is my reward!

When now working with seniors looking at their futures, i discourage them to look into education.

Its sad but when things are good Principals get rewarded for the work of "their soldiers in the front line". What do we get? Strike, furloughs, and annoyed parents that keep producing for us to develop.

This is an election year so a lot of bs by law makers. Just be careful, HSTA endorses those who support us? Where do i send my wireless bill and internet bill for the last quarter of school that i will not be able to do to your inability to fulfillll your "integrity. As i will be having to pay for college as well.

Aloha,

Lane Yanagisawa
Future retired teacher
--
Lane Yanagisawa

Gmail

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

Pay decrease

Ashley Desilva <ashley.desilva@k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 5:55 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha I am a special education teacher at Honokaa and would like to oppose the one dea of a pay differential suspension. We are in a time of trouble and we need these wages, especially at this time. How can you give a raise and then take it away in less than a year. We've already seen a decrease in pay since the school year ended.

This will definitely be a problem for me as well as all other teachers at my school. It is already a hard to staff school, therefore removing the pay differential will make teachers want to take leaves or stop teaching as a whole. I hop this will not move forward all of us teachers need this pay differential, most especially during these trying times.

Mahalo for your time
Ashley

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Gmail

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

Yes-put a hold on teacher shortage differentials

Kristen Swope <kriswope@yahoo.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I agree with putting a hold on teacher shortage differentials. ALL teachers are working hard, especially now. Give an across the board increase or none at all.

K. Eastvedt

Gmail

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

(no subject)

Rosemarie Rawlins <rrawlins@heeia.k12.hi.us> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am testifying on Action G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.
Rosemarie Rawlins
SPED teacher
He'eia Elementary, Windward District

As a Special Education teacher of 14 years, I have seen many teachers come and go in the SPED department. These differentials have helped tremendously for me personally remain in the position that I am in because it's given me that extra push and ability to use the funds not only for my family but to buy much needed supplies for students that the school is unable to supply.
As a parent, I see how much work SPED teachers put in without being rewarded or compensated for the extra time put in through paperwork's, meetings, discussions, in class interventions, trainings, etc. I see so many teachers pulling the weight I log a substitute teacher, emergency hire, etc bc there is no qualified teacher to fill these positions and I see student suffer year after year. Please do not take thee differentials away from Special education teachers because these decisions will impact out teachers and their families but also the students they teach.
Sincerely,
Rosemarie Rawlins

Gmail

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

Testimony. Action Item G

Hikai808 <kemamiya@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**
I agree with the BOE to temporarily suspend the shortage differentials in light of current circumstances. With the current state revenues, teachers may be furloughed if Hawaii cannot balance the budget. Businesses are closing and tax revenues are less than the year before. Why pay some teachers more if the state does not have the money. If we all sacrific a little we may all have a job.

Instead of thinking pay will solve our teacher shortages,try sometime else to help the hard to fill positions, more prep time, more supports in gen ed so students dont end up in a resource room. Change the teaching environment instead of throwing money at some teachers. Pay differentials do not attract new teachers to the field either. Some dually certified teachers may switch from Gen ed to SpEd but what happens when the differentials end, the dually certified go back to gen ed. I support the BOE's decision to suspend the pay inequity between hard to fill positions and gen ed teachers.

Name: K. Mamaiya
School: OCISS
Special Education- Inclusive Education.

Gmail

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

Shortage Differentials

Paige Wakefield <pwakefie@kent.edu> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Do not cut the shortage differentials. Teachers have been working hard on reopening plans. It would be a poor decision to cut pay when at the same time schools are reopening and teachers are at the frontlines risking their lives the most. Covid-19 is not a reason to cut pay but proves how valuable teachers are. Our school systems cannot afford to lose teachers especially in a time when they are concerned about their own and their families health.

--
Paige Wakefield
pwakefie@kent.edu
Bachelor's of Science in Education
Major: Integrated Mathematics
Minor: Mathematics
Kent State University
Ohio Licensed Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lee <leerehab@aol.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 7:35 PM
Reply-To: Lee <leerehab@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha BOE,

Suspending the differential for special education teachers is not the way to support teachers
There are some teachers who returned to special education.
The differential was successful in filling gaps with certified teachers

Why would you jeopardize that

Students receiving special education services are the students who will be coming to school everyday during the COVIC-19 pandemic. The special education teachers are the ones making the sacrifice for our students. Special education teachers are the front line teachers. We are the ones that will be dealing with students who are more likely to be exposed due to many of their disabilities.

Suspending the differential reinforces that special needs children are not important - we are going to take away support from their teachers, and eventually loose more teachers.

The BOE provided this differential to get teachers
Now you want to take this away

I get that there are many problems that the pandemic has caused
I feel that you are making more problems that solving by suspending the differential
We are going to loose the support for students with special needs
I don't think general education teachers are going to come back if the differential returns

Most special education teachers that I know, including myself and my wife spend more money on our students than most general education teachers do. This helped us support our students.

It seems to me that there really is enough money for the differential. Every time the State looses a due process law suit - it cost money. The State seems to loose most of the due process law suits. Many times poorly trained or classes with long term subs or even Education Assistance that are in charge of a special education classroom make mistakes that cost everyone money when we loose a due process law suit.

The suspension will cause a mass exodus from special education. I stayed in special education because of the differential. Now I am re-thinking may decision.

Please reconsider you decision to suspend the differential.

Mahalo
Lee Taylor
Special Education teacher Iao Intermediate School, Maui

Gmail

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

SPED Differentials

Shari Harada <brattatisback@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE members,

As a 17 year teacher with dual license in regular Ed and special education, I am disgusted with the decision of the DOE to discontinue the differentials. When these differentials started back in January, I decided for the 20-21 school year, I would transfer back into a sped position. Now that I am locked into my new sped position, now you tell me never mind and that I would no longer receive what I was promised? Unbelievable. Simply unbelievable. How can I teach my students to do there very best and be good moral people when the people at the top of the DOE are liars? I am now getting ready to begin my 18th year in teaching wondering to myself if I should even show up. Why don't you cut from the top instead of us in the classroom? What about all those useless Educational Officer positions that are basically admin castaways who couldn't make the cut in the schools? Now they are given their admin pay in their nice little coosh position while I am told I will receive a $10,000 differential if I move back into sped, lock into a sped position, and am then told just kidding. How dare you DOE. We don't deserve this treatment.

Gmail

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

Testimony - Action Item G

Shenell Caldeira <shenellie808@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 8:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My ‘ohana and I are writing this testimony to state our concerns about Action Item G - **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

We understand during this time that the financial hardship that the state might be facing, but now that the school year is coming around and teachers are going to be very essential during this time, why is the fact that these specific group of teachers are the ones that will have to suffer the wage loss?

My daughter attends Ke Kula ‘o ‘Ehunuikaimalino in Kealakekua, Hawaii. This is a Kaiapuni, Hawaiian immersion school through the DOE. My daughters 2nd grade teacher was new to the school year for 2019-2020. She also drove from Hilo to Kealakekua to teach our haumana. The dedication our Kumu‘s have for our haumana to teach and perpetuate the Hawaiian Language is inspiring. She also assisted our students during the summer with online zoom classes that she did for free. The kumu‘s will also volunteer their times after a long day of school to assist the makua and community that need the extra help to learn ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. Again all on their time, and now we want to do this to them? Hawaiian immersion schools are already having a hard time keeping or obtaining Kumu‘s that are trained in the Hawaiian language. We don‘t think it‘s fair that you want to cut their pay and not do the same for other teachers, if you do one to this group you should be doing it to all.

Hawaiian immersion schools are already having a hard time with the geographical locations, the staffing, curriculum, etc. Especially during this pandemic of COVID-19, these kaiapuni hawaiian immersion programs aren‘t even being offered distant learning for our haumana. How can we be ok with this? Why do our teachers in these categories have to suffer for doing something they love? Most of our teachers will have to find 2nd or 3rd jobs just to make a living here in Hawaii. How can we do this to them.

We humbly ask for you NOT to agree to this for the sake our of children in these areas that need these teachers. They shouldn‘t have to choose to leave the jobs they love doing which is helping our keiki. Hawaii already suffers in education, why would we want to do this?

Mahalo,

Jimi and Shenell Caldeira

Concerned parents of student that attends Ke Kula ‘o ‘Ehunuikaimalino, Kealakekua, Hawaii

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

RE: Shortage Differentials for HIDOE Special Education Teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools.

I am writing to the Board of Education to deter the proposal that is being presented to defer millions of dollars in shortage differentials that the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) began in January of 2020 for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools. As a new teacher in the State of Hawaii I am already paid below the cost of living which requires me to hold a second job in order to make ends meet. Being a Special Education teacher my work load is different from a general education teacher; it is more rigorous, follows federal guidelines and expectations which ultimately hold me liable for a students education when a student falls behind, fails, or does not meet expected educational targets.

Currently, I have 15 plus students that I follow and because we do not have a pull out setting, only inclusion I am expected to follow each student to all of their classes and provide support in all of their subjects. I am to scaffold and modify work for each student and grade all their assignments. I am also responsible to write all of their Individualized Education Plans, coordinate meetings and keep a log of their progress.

The differential that was given to us in January helped compensate the responsibilities that come with the position and role of a Special Education teacher. I know taking this differential away will make it difficult knowing that my efforts and responsibilities are not seen as being valuable or as an asset to my school community. I am also concerned that I will receive a cut in pay of my regular salary which will make it very difficult for me to live and work in the community where I live. COVID 19 has already put a strain on my finances, personal life, and the lives of my students. I strongly urge you to **not** defer the differentials that the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) began in January of 2020 for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools. The education of our students is essential for our future. Please do not target students that are already struggling to read, write, and understand concepts. We will lose them and prevent them from being successful in any career they choose.

Respectfully,
Heidi Alvarez

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

Testimony

Bob Lehardy <bob.lehardy@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

RE: State of Hawaii Board of Education meeting, Jul 23, 2020, Action Item G: Board action on discontinuing incentive pay

Aloha,

My name is Bob Lehardy. I am a special education teacher at Kapa'a High School, and I am writing to ask that you vote to against Action Item G.

We all know that our State has a shortage of teachers overall, but especially in hard to fill areas that include special education, Hawaiian immersion, and some due to the geographic location. These innovative incentive pays appear, in just one school semester, to have had a positive impact.

We also know that the State is facing an unprecedented fiscal situation due to COVID-19.

I would urge the board to find the courage to stay the course. Surely, within a budget of about $2.1 billion, the Board and the DOE can find approximately $35 million to fund these incentives for the upcoming school year. The superintendent seemed very confident that the program could be funded, even without Legislative support, when she announced the plan. I find it hard to believe that even in this fiscal crisis, the Board and the DOE can't find 1.67% slack in the department's budget.

I also fear that if this incentive pay is cut, the long-term impact on the State's teacher shortage in these hard to fill areas, will be dramatic. Promises were made, and teachers made decisions, and commitments, based on those promises.

Find a way.

Sincerely,

Bob Lehardy

Testimony

Lauryn Hirano <laurynj44@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 9:17 PM

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Lauryn Castro and I am an educator at Kea'au Elementary School. I am writing in regards to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Kea'au is a hard-to-staff geographical location, and even a temporary discontinuance of extra compensation will make it more difficult for teachers at our school to service our students during this unprecedented time. Many of us spend our own money to help supply and support our students with their academic and emotional needs. Removing this differential will potentially drop our 90% complex area teacher retention rate, when we are already facing a teacher shortage this upcoming school year. Please reject this proposal so 4,000 teachers will not see a drop in pay.

These differentials are so important for teacher's in schools such as mine. We put so much money into our student's basic needs and our classrooms to make them feel welcomed and comfortable. Many of these students come from broken homes and can't afford things such as toothbrushes, slippers, snacks, school supplies, etc. Teachers use their own personal monies to pay for items such as these. To keep students engaged in learning we also supply our own classrooms with prizes that encourage them to try their best and to meet goals. Plus, we just like to spoil and love them. Believe it or not, they need this, especially in times such as these. Again, please do not take away the much needed extra compensation.

Sincerely,

Lauryn Castro

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shari Harada <shariharada@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE members,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Please include your name, and your school or workplace if you're an educator, or school that your children attend.

My name is Sharian Harada-Peck and I teach at Kealakehe High.

Is anyone surprised how this DOE "request" came right after our Superintendent got ripped by our State senate committee for COVID response? Kishimoto blatantly lied in stating that teachers have received training. Regular education students are have difficulties navigating distant/Hybrid learning so imagine what our special education students are and will be going through?

Did the state have fun with the Felix consent decree? Well get ready for round 2. By removing the differentials we are setting up our special education program for complete failure. There are many dual certified teachers who left regular education positions and transferred into special education positions specifically for the differentials. It seems as though the fight and true reasons are forgotten. Maybe we embrace that our most fragile students population should be left with the least experienced personnel. Our system will not show the result of this poor decision for the upcoming 20-21 school year but wait til we see the drop for the 21-22 school year and beyond. How do we plan to address compensatory education for our special education students with rookie teachers who are just learning what an IEP is? And that my friends is where due process will catch the DOE.

Try forcing an AUDIT for the DOE. Tease out the non-essential positions and force those people back into the classroom. That's how we can fulfill some of the teacher shortages. Currently, there are more chiefs than Indians. I know of several educational officers who are school administration failures time and again so they get some district or state made up position to maintain their administration pay and status. Why do we punish the lowest level? Does anybody realize what it takes to step into a special education classroom. For the first 3 years of my career I had regular ed and honors students. During my fourth year I switched to special education, 15 years later I'm glad I did. I see the need, I fulfill the need, I am somebody for those who our most delicate population. I have been working a part-time job for years to make up the cost of living however since we have had the differentials I've been able to just have one full-time job. Please don't remove the differentials.

Mahalo for your time,
Sharian Harada-Peck

Testimony

Mahe Directo <mahe0571@gmail.com> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board of Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Richidette Directo and I'm a Special Education teacher at Waiakea Elementary School. During these unprecedented times, the consideration of a temporary discontinuance of compensation sends the message that our teachers and students in these special populations are undervalued, unimportant and unappreciated.

As a Special Education teacher, we are already expected to carry an insurmountable workload before and during the COVID pandemic. In addition, we are asked to enter a work environment that can compromise our health. As a newly certified and licensed teacher in Hawaii, I was very excited to teach. When I received the differential pay earlier this year, I was very grateful and felt appreciated and valued in my profession. I felt like I can finally make a good and respectable living for me and my family, and I no longer have to contemplate about moving from the islands, my home that I love.

To be clear, I became a teacher because I wanted to inspire and make a positive impact in the lives of our young children and that money was never the motivation for choosing this profession. Growing up in Hawaii and attending the public school system, I've seen many of my teachers work hard and for some, they had second jobs. I thought to myself, why do teachers need to work extra hard. As I recalled, my teachers never complained, but said they worked to survive.

As I write this testimony, I am reminded of what is important in life. For me it is God, my family, friends and people. Hawaii will always be my home. But when I've seen my family and friends move from Hawaii and for some never to return because of financial hardships, my heart was saddened. Why should it be okay or even be expected to work and never be able to live comfortably in this place of Aloha. I work to provide for my family and enjoy life together. But our system and society has created work to take time away from our familes and friends. That one job that we enjoy is no longer adequate because the pay is not sufficient for families to live and survive. This is not and should not be about MONEY, but it should be all about showing a little bit of Aloha and appreciation to our kumus and keikis of our state. I was taught to believe to always show Aloha. Also, showing Aloha and appreciation in any family, organization or business, will produce grateful and generous people.

I humbly ask to reconsider the discontinuance of compensation and show a little bit of Aloha, especially during these unfortunate times. I would like to leave you with these words from the Bible in Proverbs 11:25: "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

Sincerely,
Richidette Directo
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

Shortage Differentials

Stacey Kim <stacey.ihilani@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 12:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear sirs and madams,
I am a special education teacher of 12 years who was granted the differential pay for the work that I have be doing, and now you want to take it away? I think that it is unfair to give something that was earned, and then decide to take it away. How would you feel if someone did this to you? Are you taking a pay cut? This is exactly what you're proposing- cut their pay, give them more work to do, and expose them to all these children who are exposed to who knows who.

I work extremely hard because I care about my students. It excites me to see my struggling readers read more fluently, and comprehend what their reading. It warms my heart when my math strugglers finally understand how to solve a multi-step word problem, or master their multiplication facts. I am a very passionate teacher who spends my own money, and uses my personal days to go to workshops that my school can't afford to send me to because I feel it will make me a better teacher. I not only have a group of students that I work with daily, but I am the special education department head, and I also mentor student teachers who are working towards becoming special education.

Please see our worth by continuing funding for teacher shortage differentials. Being a special education teacher gets more difficult every year because of new guidelines, or laws that requires us to do something more. The differential helps me to get supplies that I need for students, take classes or go to workshops that will enhance my teaching skills, and it will allow me to focus on being a passionate teacher instead of one who needs to get another job to supplement my income. Again, please vote to continue funding for teacher shortage differentials.

Mahalo a nui,
Stacey Kim, M.Ed

Gmail

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

Case to open schools up 100% distance learning (Online Learning)

Jon Shigaki <jon.shigaki@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 6:48 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen of our Board of Education Members.

As a tech coordinator, morning broadcast facilitator, advisor to the anime club, and long time volunteer of the marching band, it hurts to see not having students in school. However, I want our students and teachers to learn in a safe way. We can always learn online, we can always play sports another day. We can never reset our health if we get this virus.

A recent article posted by Forbes magazine and the New York Times on a large South Korean study is not good to open up schools especially when there is no cure or vaccine yet. Here is a link to the article for you to see: https://www.forbes.com/sites/rachelsandler/2020/07/18/young-people-most-likely-to-spread-coronavirus-at-home-large-study-finds/#57025aedfa7a

I was reminded by a friend that students cannot enroll into the school without proper vaccinations. Then I beg this question: Why are we pushing students to go back into our classroom when there is no cure/vaccines for this highly infectious and deadly disease?

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

--
Jon Shigaki
Technology Coordinator/Morning Broadcast Facilitator
980 Lahainaluna Road
Lahaina, HI 96761
Phone: (808) 662-4000 ext. 274

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Board Meeting Action Items

Jonathon Medeiros <jonathon.medeiros@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 7:07 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

- Jonathon Medeiros, NBCT, High School Teacher HIDOE
- General Business Meeting
- Agenda item - VI - Action Items - D and H
- Comments

Aloha Board members. I am writing to continue to urge the BOE to slow down our dangerous rush to reopen schools in a few weeks. Positive cases keep coming in daily. We have had more positive cases in half of July then in the previous 6 or 8 weeks, with no slowing in sight. Learning time can be recovered; lives can not be.

If it is too dangerous to have BOE meetings in person, it should be too dangerous to push teachers and students into F2F schooling. If we insist on reopening schools by August 4, we need to allow for telework options when those options work for certain schools. For example, if a school has one day a week when 100% of its students are learning from home, then teachers should be allowed to work from a safe place, not a room that is stuffed with over 100 people every week.

If we insist on opening school in early August, let us take a safer tact and open virtually only until we know we can keep everyone safe. As it is, schools do not have plans to mandate masks in classrooms nor can they explain how and how often classrooms and all surfaces in those rooms will be disinfected between classes.

If we insist on opening schools in a matter of mere days, know that the health and wellness (or lack thereof) of teachers and students in Hawai‘i is on you, people who do not step foot in classrooms, by and large; people who are doing their work remotely, for safety. Our health and safety is as important as anyone else‘s.

Slow down. Let us take time to plan and learn. Please direct the DOE to provide flexible options, like telework, keeping school virtual until September, or simply delaying the year all together.

With aloha,

Jonathon Medeiros, NBCT

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

Testimony

Cynthia Levy <cwlevy67@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 7:18 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am a special education teacher at Salt Lake Elementary School. I am writing to share that we need to keep the differentials for all the teachers that this will affect if you take it away from us. This is the wrong decision to take away the differentials will affect the most vulnerable students in our schools. Teachers are having anxiety due to situation of COVID 19 in which you are putting us in harm of contacting the virus and now you want to take money from us that were recently given. You are not being realistic and not showing concern for your teachers well being and financial situation . You are aware that teachers are always spending their own money to help support the students in the classroom. Please reconsider your plans. It's not the time to do take away differentials !!!!!!

Cynthia W. Levy

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Opening Safely

hawaiibrothers <hawaiibrothers@aol.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 7:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This is another concern I've not heard anything on

My nightmare is that subs will also be in contact with every other school they also sub for so my students and I are exposed to our own school as well as many other schools

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

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

Differential cuts

Pablo Aguilar <pablo.aguilar@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:27 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please do not suspend differential cuts. As a single parent working as a special ed. teacher here in rural Lanai I finally feel like my head is enough above water to enjoy looking around and seeing and enjoying the beauty of my surroundings. My obligations towards my students families after hours/ home visits, as well as the cost of living on Lanai whos grocery stores have a virtual monopoly on pricing is unbelievable but true nonetheless. its been too much but the differential pay has been a godsend. Us teachers me included have been working through the summer during this unprecedented time getting ready for the fall and and I feel adequate compensation is only doing the right thing.
Mahalo
Pablo Aguilar
Special Education Teacher
LHES

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psych.docx
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Topic		Human Development	
Benchmark SS.12P.2.1		Analyze the significant aspects of major theories of human development (e.g., Piaget, Erikson, Freud, Gilligan, Kohlberg)	
Sample Performance Assessment (SPA)		The student: Compares the developmental theories of Piaget, Erickson, Gilligan, and Kohlberg.	
Rubric			
Advanced	**Proficient**	**Partially Proficient**	**Novice**
Analyze the significant aspects of the major theories of human development, drawing relevant conclusions supported by clear and precise detail	Analyze the significant aspects of the major theories of human development, drawing relevant conclusions	Analyze the significant aspects of the major theories of human development, drawing partially relevant conclusions	Ineffectively analyze the significant aspects of the major theories of human development

Skills/Verbs/How Content/What/Nouns

Analyze		Significant aspects of major major theories of human development (e.g., Piaget, Erikson, Freud, Gilligan, Kohlberg)
Drawing conclusions		

Analyze;

_____ the significant aspects of major theories of human development (e.g., Piaget, Erikson, Freud, Gilligan, Kohlberg)

Drawing relevant conclusions_____

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kaylan Ramirez <kaylan.ramirez@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am submitting testimony on Action Item G. The extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and the Hawaii Language Immersion program needs to continue and be intact for the school year 2020-2021. I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. A retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, but it will devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

--
Kaylan Ramirez
7th Grade English
Kalama Intermediate School

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

Continued Funding for Teacher Shortage Differentials

Stacy Terry <sjct.terry@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education,

I urge board members to reject the current proposal and continue funding for teacher shortage differentials. The retraction of differentials will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. A lack of qualified teachers will hurt our school, students, and community.

Thank you,
Stacy Terry

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shelby Hurst <shelby_hurst@kahaluu.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:02 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,
I am emailing to testify on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.** I worked for Kalaheo High School for 3 years as a resource Special Education Teacher and just took a new Special Education job with Kahalu'u Elementary School for this coming school year. The pay differential you promised to special educators and others made a HUGE difference in my life this year. I was barely making it by before the pay differential with the starting pay salary of a teacher (even w/ a degree in Special Education & MA in Educational Technology). I am very scared for what may happen and if I will have to leave my SPED position to be able to afford to live here or leave the state in general. Please don't go back on your promise and put hundreds of Families at the same risk.

Thank you for your time,

Shelby Hurst
--
Shelby Hurst
Special Education Teacher
Kahalu'u Elementary School

Gmail

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

July 23, 2020 BOE Testimony

Sara Aronin <sara_aronin@baldwin.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

General Business meeting on 7/23/2020
I am **opposed** to Action Item G - the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to -staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Dear BOE,
As we are about to embark on uncharted learning in our schools we already have over 500 vacancies in special education and remote learning areas. This number is going to continue to rise as teachers are not able to work their second jobs in the tourist industry and will continue to leave the island.
Our only hope for our most vulnerable populations is to use what HSTA's analysis shows to work - supplemental pay. The research is clear that supplemental pay WORKS and KEEPS teachers working with our most vulnerable populations.
When schools are picking models, students with special needs or who are considered vulnerable are allowed and encouraged to go to school, but who will teach them without qualified special education teachers.
PLEASE consider who you are hurting most, our students in schools that are hard to staff, students with special needs, and Hawaiian immersion - our vulnerable populations deserve better from you, the Board of Education.
Please oppose Action Item G and keep supplemental pay.
Thank you in advance for putting our students first,
Dr. Sara Aronin Special Education Teacher Baldwin HIgh School, Maui
Mom of school age children in 6th grade, 3rd grade, and kindergarten

Gmail

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

Testimony

J Waite <oh1digital@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

___

According to the HIDOE's own data teacher shortage differentials were/are working and yet the BOE want to suspend them. Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas. Why would you cut a program that works? It defies logic. Hawaii is already facing a severe shortage of qualified teachers, why cut a known program that works? Historically, "temporary cuts" almost always end up being permanent and it would be incredibly short-sighted to cut the program now. It is simply the wrong decision and will hurt our kids.

Thank you,

J Waite
Parent of child at Jarret Middle

Gmail

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

Hard to staff bonus

Jake Gumm <jake_gumm@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:30 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I'm Charles Gumm and I'm a Special Education teacher at Makaha Elementary. I urge to continue the hard to staff bonus. The students we teach are often being raised by one grandparent or one parent, which results in these children going through a lot of trauma. These children often do not have support at home, which results in us teachers having to teach these students about social skills, hygiene, and even simple skills like taking turns. It is very difficult teaching these students and the bonus is very much needed. Aloha,

Charles Gumm

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony

Brock Watanuki <brock.watanuki@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Board's action on temporarily discontinuing extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

First, I understand and appreciate the financial situation that the pandemic has put the state and the Department in, but strongly feel that this burden should not be weathered on the backs of teachers. It is sad to think that we have had to defend our profession and very health and well-being not only to our communities at large (no, teachers are educators, and are not babysitters providing childcare so parents are free to work), to our own governor (of whom we are also advocating against a 20% pay-cut that has never really been taken off the bargaining table as a viable option), and now to our own department (to which we are also advocating for the health and safety of not only our students, but also our own with the initial proposed spacing of students and current uncertainty of schools reopening in the midst of a worsening pandemic). Compile this with the highly unusual and stressful workloads and situations teachers were obligated to go through at the closing of schools at the end of the third quarter (shifting our entire instruction and facilitation of countless meetings with parents and administration to online methods in the middle of the school year was not an easy thing to do!), teachers' creativity, resiliency, and grit should be praised, not punished. Furthermore, to acknowledge that teachers have had to go through all of this within the span of several months, while also trying to fend off a highly contagious and deadly virus, in the middle of a worldwide crisis, while on an already-shoe string budget, and still are meant to advocate against even more financial cuts, is truly tragic... and yet, here we are.

I myself have been a special education teacher in an fully self-contained classroom for the past seven continuous years, and have enjoyed every minute of it, but do recognize the "extra work" that is inevitably tied into this position: an understanding that there really are no "breaks" when working with this most vulnerable population all day, every day; the need to create functional and meaningful curriculum and learning opportunities for our very unique learners, often without the supports enjoyed by our general education colleagues (e.g. purchased curriculums, curriculum coaches, curriculum maps, other department-level supports, etc.); the required knowledge of special education law; the numerous meetings with parents, administrators, and teachers throughout the school year; the additional required knowledge to support students who are non-verbal (and who often have little to no functional communication), have major behavioral concerns, have large social and academic deficits, have little to no adaptive/self-help skills, or who may even be handicapped, immunocompromised, and/or bed-ridden. The list of skills, knowledge, and expectations special education teachers have, on top of the “normal” teacher list certainly is apparent and growing. With this in mind, I and my special education teacher colleagues certainly do not deserve this unwarranted pay-cut.

Finally, to give my argument some perspective on how devastating this may be to teachers in my situation, consider the following. A brand new highly-qualified special education teacher just entering the profession makes $49,100 (Class II, Step 5). Assuming that this teacher was teaching in a special education classroom and did receive the additional $10,000 per year, this additional amount would account for over 20% of this teacher’s base annual income. Couple this with the additional 20% pay cut initially proposed by our governor (of which, again, has not been formally taken out of consideration), this teacher is now looking at losing over 40% of his annual income compared to when he/she first entered the profession. It’s no wonder

why special education is such a hard field to fill, and why teaching as a whole is a viable career option for so few.

In closing, this entire proposal is unwarranted, and should not be considered. If passed, this will be yet another blow to teaching in general, and will have a direct negative impact for teachers in these already hard-to-fill positions. Please celebrate and invest in education, and look elsewhere to save money.

Thank you,

Brock Watanuki

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

Against reopening in person

Eunice Werner <eunice.werner@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 10:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Eunice Werner, Teacher at Kailua Intermediate School

Please do not have us come back to school face to face on August 4th amidst rising cases and emerging research that shows older kids one of the biggest vectors of Covid 19. I, who love love love teaching students in person, am strongly in support of distance learning until numbers are going down and we have more solid safety protocol. We are having all our pre service meetings on Zoom and I cannot imagine any teacher returning to face to face right now. I will take a leave of absence or quit to protect myself and my family. Thank you for reconsidering given new evidence.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/18/health/coronavirus-children-schools.html

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

Re-Opening

Terry Low <terry@terryjlow.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 10:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members:

I strongly urge the BOE to reconsider reopening schools to any form of face to face education in the upcoming first quarter of the school year. I taught for 24 years at Kauai High School and retired in May 2018. I am a member of the NEA and the HSTA Retired, keeping up with issues relating to education and dialoging with many teachers currently employed by the HIDOE. The active teachers I know all want what's best for their students. Many are afraid that there are too many questions relating to safety and health remaining to open up schools at this time. Some with school age children are frustrated that their children are falling behind because schools schools had to go to distanced learning. Some wonder how they are going to pay for increased childcare services related to reopening scenarios. It is a difficult and frustrating time for all.

After listening to the discussion with Dr. Kishimoto, the Senate Committee, and the Department of Health members on July 16th, it convinced me that the reopening of schools needs to be delayed. Personally, I feel a delay of the whole first quarter would be appropriate, but at a minimum students should not return to school before August 17th. Faculty and staff could return on a limited basis before that, using that time for things like training, curriculum planning, facility organization. The HIDOE could use that time to better articulate protocols and communicate that information to the general public. Rushing to open schools before that would be an unnecessary mistake. I don't think a delay would have a major impact on student education. Getting it wrong at the start could have serious consequences.

Please reconsider your plans for reopening schools to students on August 4th. I don't think schools can safely reopen on that date.

Sincerely,
Terry Low

Gmail

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

Teacher Shortage Differentials

Suzy & Geoff Lauer <lauer5090@twc.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 10:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE Members,

I believe the temporary suspension of differentials would be counterproductive to the effected schools, teachers, and the local economy. My daughter is a long-time teacher at an especially difficult school to staff in lower Puna. While her dedication to this school is laudable, her finances struggle to keep up.

In this time of global crisis, governments on all levels are desperately attempting to stimulate their economies. To take an action that would un-stimulate teachers now seems inane to me!

Geoffrey Lauer

RE: Schools & COVID-19

brooke nasser <b.l.nasser@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:05 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The ideal solution for schools is to have remote learning until there is a vaccine or COVID-19 cases are under control. On May 9, the White House gave guidelines for reopening states. These guidelines stated that there must be a "downward trajectory in cases (flu-like and confirmed COVID-19)" and mandatory "hospital capacity and testing for at-risk health care workers." Are those criteria being met?

When schools reopen on Aug. 4, I will not be able to see my 74-year-old parents, whose fragile health puts them in a vulnerable position, until school ends in May 2021. I moved home to Hawai'i to be near my aging parents, my dad in particular whose health is extremely brittle. My role as a public school teacher means that I will need to stay away from them for the next ten months. I can accept that IF you follow all CDC best practices guidelines.

Educators believe in the value of what we do. We can do what we are trained to do remotely. However, if economics and politics dictate that schools must re-open, AT THE VERY LEAST the BOE, HIDOE and HSTA should agree on a blanket mask requirement. Start with the requirement, then work out exceptions, not vice versa.

Reopening schools should not be about politics or emotions— it should be about facts. If the decision to re-open were simply about safety, we would not be doing it — a remote learning option would have been chosen until such time as a vaccine was available or COVID-19 was being managed effectively by the state. We closed schools last April when case numbers were starting to rise. Now, with daily case numbers in the double-digits for the past two weeks, several more deaths, and no vaccine, you are reopening. That decision is about nothing other than economics and politics.

And the state is pushing this policy through while holding educators hostage with the constant threat of pay cuts. So you expect us to enter a high-risk situation for potentially less pay, despite the fact that teachers are already undervalued and underpaid in Hawai'i. Your message to educators is clear: you do not value what we do.

If that is not the message you are trying to send, change your policy.

I want to go back to school. I did not become a public-school teacher naively. We all went into education because we believe an educated population is essential — ESPECIALLY right now, with rampant misinformation and so many people — from politicians to parents and even teachers! — citing opinion over data in the ongoing COVID-19 debate. Please use CDC guidelines if you are going to ask us to risk our health to do our jobs. Use data and science, not politics and emotions.

The CDC, citing an editorial published in the Journal of the American Medicine Association, announced July 14 that cloth face masks slow the spread of COVID-19. That is unequivocal.

Why are masks the sticking point? Schools are vectors for viruses. Most Hawai'i classrooms in August and September are stifling. Fans are maximized to stir whatever sluggish air exists. The politics of reopening schools should not jeopardize our kids and education professionals. Schools should not be the litmus test for COVID-19.

Let's debunk a prevailing myth.

Do facemasks restrict breathing? Per NIH, study after study has shown that facemasks do not lead to CO2 intoxication or oxygen deficiency in healthy people 2+ years old. NIH recommends masks not be worn by children under the age of 2 years or by anyone with breathing problems.

Are facemasks uncomfortable? Yes. When used for prolonged periods of time, they can be hot and comfortable.

However, studies over the past three months have now shown that facemasks slow COVID-19.

Here are the solutions.

Ideal: remote learning until such time as a vaccine exists or COVID-19 management falls under May 9 reopening guidelines.

Secondary: If you must reopen, all schools should have a mask requirement with exceptions only for those with legitimate medical issues.

Exceptions: In individual cases, if your health is so fragile, or a respiratory illness prevents you from wearing a mask, exceptions can be made with guidance from a medical professional. However, remote learning may be the safest and healthiest solution for these students and eductors.

Gmail

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

SUPPORT the proposal

Meghan Bonnie <meghan.bonnie@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
As a middle school teacher at a charter school, I have already seen the impact of Covid 19 on our students and teachers.
I am writing to share my FULL SUPPORT in the proposal to temporarily deduct pay of some staff during this tough time.
Although some staff will be impacted, our community schools will have a fighting chance to stay operating.
Mahalo for your time.

.

Gmail

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

Hard to Staff Pay for Teachers

Sonya Porcher <porcher1005@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:09 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Konawaena Elementary School. I began teaching with the Hawaii Department of Education in September 2019. One of the reasons for continuing my employment with the Hawaii DOE is the issuance of the hard to staff pay for teachers. I was offered a teaching position paying $5000 a month with housing provisions in the United Arabic Emirates in January 2020, but I turned down the opportunity due to the hard to staff increase in pay. The additional money allowed me to find a suitable apartment and afford the cost of living in Hawaii. Also, with other bills and responsibilities, it gave me the opportunity to manage my finances. Unfortunately, with the removal of the hard to staff pay, I will need to make a decision regarding continuing employment in Hawaii. The additional money was a definite decision to my continued employment with the school system.

I am writing to petition the continued provision of the hard to staff pay for teachers. I fully understand that it is a difficult time economically due to COVID-19. However, if the teachers are already one of the lowest paid individuals and are being slighted from additional funding, it places added pressure on decisions to remain employed or seek employment in other places.

I am hopeful that the Board of Education will make a decision to provide the needed funds to secure well qualified and needed teachers in Kona at schools that are challenged with teacher retention.

Please feel free to contact me at 20311132@hi.k12.us if additional information is needed.

Kind regards,

Sonya Porcher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Roger Courtot <rogerjudycourtot@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

As a former Hawaii Special Education Teacher I am deeply disappointed in the State's decision to eliminate pay differential / incentives for special education and hard to fill positions. I do not believe it will be temporary. I also endured three years of "furlough" during the Abercrombie administration. Shame on you!!! I worked harder and longer during the furlough to meet the needs of my students. I have shared my teaching experience of almost a decade in Hawaii with educators on the main land - they are shocked. My reflection then and now is that the State of Hawaii does not value the education of its keike. No wonder Hawaii cannot keep its teachers! Do what is pono. Judith Courtot

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

URGING Board of Education to continuE funding for teacher shortage differentials

Kaleo Waiau <kaleo.waiau@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Bill Giebink <bill.giebink@mauihigh.org>, Nanna Lindberg <Nanna.Lindberg@k12.hi.us>

Aloha;
I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**. My name is Kaleo Waia'u. I work at Maui High School. I am a Special education teacher there. O have grandkids in our feeder schools.

I am writing to you to say that I understand Hawaii is facing a huge financial crisis due to COVID-19. But a retraction of differentials may balance budgets, it will absolutely exterminate our already infinitesimal supply of qualified teachers for OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS. As stated by Union Head Rosenlee, “even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. Slashing educators’ pay will be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread.”

My mother taught at Hilo High School for 38+ years, before there was even a Union. She saw how crisis' were handled like this. I swore I would never work in the public school system because the state does not support it, only to find myself feeling the obligation to step into that gap so kids would not suffer due to the poor judgment of funders.

Hawaii’s teacher shortage crisis will not only worsen but lead to a collapse in our public education system. Its time people with legislative power and privilege step into that gap to keep Hawaii's children from bearing the judgment of poor care and oversight with is the legislature's obligation.

Kaleo Waiau, Department Chair
Maui High Special Education
808.727.4130
808.264.3492 (c)

The Hawaii State Department of Education ("HIDOE") does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion or disability. This requirement extends to all of HIDOE's programs and activities, including employment and admissions as applicable. In addition, the HIDOE does not tolerate acts of harassment on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, or disability. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, or disability, is encouraged to report such harassment. Students and parents may report allegations of discrimination or harassment to the Principal, Mr. Jamie Yap at 727-4000, or via email at jamie.yap@k12.hi.us; OR to the HIDOE's Civil Rights Compliance Office at (808)586-3322.

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

Testimony

Renae Hopkins <renaenhopkins@aol.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:59 AM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,
Please do not eliminate the extra compensation plan for SpEd educators. According to FAPE, all children deserve access to an equal opportunity education. Our SpEd teachers work tirelessly and without question to support our children- preparing them to be functional members of society. The DOE must take into consideration the hard work it takes to maintain that standard. I am an LPSC and I have worked closely with SpEd educators. It would be a disservice to the community and all other SEL educators to remove this plan. We need all the help we can get. Removing this compensation plan is showing that these helping professionals are not worthy or of value within the school system.

Mahalo,
Renae Hopkins, M.Ed, LPSC

Testifying on Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra comensation for special ed, hard-to-staff geo locations, and Hawaiian immersion for 20/21 school year

Rhonda Comet <rhondacomet@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 12:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education in our great state of Hawaii:

The data confirms that our Keiki did much better with qualified teachers in our inclusion rooms due to differential pay bringing in needed highly qualified educational instructors. Why would we tragically take this away from our Keiki at Lahaina Intermediate School that is historically a Title I school? Our TEACHERS ARE LEAVING, we need them here to increase educational scores throughout the state. Do not allow a temporary discontinuance or any discontinuance of the differentials when our Keiki need more support not less in these extraordinarily challenging times due to COVID-19. It would be cruel to Keiki, teachers, economy, and our communities to do so.

I have taught for five years in Hawaii and I am a Special Education teacher in a hard-to-staff area at Lahaina Intermediate School on island of Maui. We rarely have enough Special education teachers, yet due to these harsh possible measures, I will not stay in Lahaina, I will find a content area in which to teach and get out of special education, or I can take my license to another state.

I understand the need for the State of Hawaii to balance budgets, yet has any financial person thought about how hitting one of the only stable incomes in the state could affect the economy in all communities here? Balancing budgets for any financial plan must include the movement of money. If teachers have no money to move, it will decimate the economy of Hawaii, it is the wrong choice in the bigger picture. People will move away and make our great state stagnate.

Cutting pay on teachers also means the communities, who have historically suffered, will continue to suffer from greater educational consequences. This TOO is a greater financial consequence as these students become active adult members of our local society. We simply can not go in the opposite direction. We must move forward and not allow this to take place.

As I watched the state Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 hearing to discuss SY2020–21 and the reopening of school campuses, I was appalled. I heard that teachers had had training. We have been on vacation, not one training. We are not prepared. DHS did not relieve my concerns about what to do in the event a student has a serious illness and I did not see a plan in place for any such COVID illness. I and many of my colleagues are scared. Without proper protocols in place, teachers are making the decision easy to retire early or leave the island to pursue something else or go where there are proper protocols in other states' public systems that do exist.

During the committee hearing, a comment from a summer school special education teacher said that administrators did not check on her one time over the summer, thus the data Kishimoto touted as "summer schools were successful" is not accurate or verified. One comment is quoted here:

"Utterly disgusting of HIDOE! Many of us SPED teachers have been working all summer with no safeguards and guidelines in place. Putting ourselves and our families at risk every day!! Enough is enough! I'm ready to quit and take my expertise, dedication, love, and passion to somewhere it will be appreciated and appropriately compensated. I feel like I've been drowning for the past 16 years in this field. The kids lost an amazing SPED teacher when my husband left 2 years ago, and they will lose another....."

I am beseeching you to consider all the words of every teacher that is scared with loving big hearts for their concern of Keiki, self, family, and community. I personally ask for more time to be better prepared safely by working with my school to work on safety protocols and distance learning. I personally ask that you consider not pulling salaries away as we have MORE work cut out for special education teachers in the way of assessments, etc.... We really can not take on more stress as teachers. Our community can not manage more stress full of our loved Keiki. You do not want to be one of the reasons for that added burden. Help us help our communities in the great State of Hawai‘i.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration to this matter.

Rhonda Comet
Special Education Inclusion Teacher
Lahaina Intermediate School

Gmail

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

General Business Meeting/Reopening of Schools for 2020-2021 School Year

Julie Keohohou <julie.keohohou@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 12:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Members,
Hi, my name is Julie Keohohou and I am a kindergarten teacher at Sunset Beach Elementary School. I am asking you to rethink opening up the schools on August 4th. Our COVID-19 cases have doubled since March and there are many "hot spots" on the island of Oahu according to the Department of Health website that was updated on Sunday, July 19, 2020. I am worried and afraid for the health and safety of EVERYONE...students, teachers, and ALL the FAMILIES that WILL BE affected WHEN COVID-19 cases happen in our schools. It has already happened at care homes here on the island...it WILL happen in OUR SCHOOLS. There isn't enough safety procedures in place to reopen the schools SAFELY for EVERYONE...training has not been mandatory or required of teachers and staff...some have taken these on their own time. It is already hard enough to find disinfecting supplies for my own home let alone for my classroom. There is not adequate PPE or cleaning supplies to open schools SAFELY for EVERYONE. At what cost are you and our state willing to risk just to be the first state to open schools during a pandemic...I don't feel that HUMAN LIVES should be the RISK to take and we should choose not to open schools on August 4th. LIVES MATTER in this "race" that people are choosing...not BEING FIRST.

Sincerely,
Julie Keohohou
Kindergarten Teacher

Gmail

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

Continue to fund shortage differentials to teachers

Suzanne Lauer <suzylauer15@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 12:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To start with, Hawaii teachers are the lowest paid in the nation while dealing with one of the highest costs of living. Why do you think there is a shortage of teachers in Hawaii? Our teachers are leaving the classroom, and their lifework, for better paying, less stressful jobs. To deprive these dedicated teachers of their bonus for work over and above the normal teaching requirements in these hard to staff schools will lead to loss of more teachers to the detriment of the students.

Proud parent of a teacher,
Suzanne Lauer

Testimony (7/23/2020)

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:01 PM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>
Cc: "BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

19 July 2020

Members of Hawaii State Board of Education

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Keith Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 24 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending Hawaii public school.

My name is Patricia Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 29 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending Hawaii public school.

We are both in what is considered an "at-risk category". Regardless of safety measures in place, there is still no guarantee of complete protection. We care for two elderly parents in our home, and one parent who lives elsewhere. We do NOT want to transmit anything to them since they are in a "high-risk category".

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html

Data is very important as we all know. There was a large study in South Korea and this study showed that middle and high school students can transmit the virus just as much as adults do. Even though it's in South Korea, the virus is not bound by nationality or ethnicity.

Here is an article (and a link to the study with data) published by the New York Times with a weblink to the actual study:

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/10/20-1315_article

Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds
The study of nearly 65,000 people in South Korea suggests that school reopenings will trigger more outbreaks.
By Apoorva Mandavilli
New York Times
July 18, 2020
Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds (account required to read)

In the heated debate over reopening schools, one burning question has been whether and how efficiently children can spread the virus to others.

A large new study from South Korea offers an answer: Children younger than 10 transmit to others much less often than adults do, but the risk is not zero. And those between the ages of 10 and 19 can spread the virus at least as well as adults do.

The findings suggest that as schools reopen, communities will see clusters of infection take root that include children of all ages, several experts cautioned.

“I fear that there has been this sense that kids just won’t get infected or don’t get infected in the same way as adults and that, therefore, they’re almost like a bubbled population,” said Michael Osterholm, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Minnesota.

“There will be transmission,” Dr. Osterholm said. “What we have to do is accept that now and include that in our plans.”

Several studies from Europe and Asia have suggested that young children are less likely to get infected and to spread the virus. But most of those studies were small and flawed, said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute.

The new study “is very carefully done, it’s systematic and looks at a very large population,” Dr. Jha said. “It’s one of the best studies we’ve had to date on this issue.”

Other experts also praised the scale and rigor of the analysis. South Korean researchers identified 5,706 people who were the first to report Covid-19 symptoms in their households between Jan. 20 and March 27, when schools were closed, and then traced the 59,073 contacts of these “index cases.” They tested all of the household contacts of each patient, regardless of symptoms, but only tested symptomatic contacts outside the household.

The first person in a household to develop symptoms is not necessarily the first to have been infected, and the researchers acknowledged this limitation. Children are also less likely than adults to show symptoms, so the study may have underestimated the number of children who set off the chain of transmission within their households.

Still, experts said the approach was reasonable. “It is also from a place with great contact tracing, done at the point interventions were being put in place,” said Bill Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Children under 10 were roughly half as likely as adults to spread the virus to others, consistent with other studies. That may be because children generally exhale less air — and therefore less virus-laden air — or because they exhale that air closer to the ground, making it less likely that adults would breathe it in.

Even so, the number of new infections seeded by children may rise when schools reopen, the study authors cautioned. “Young children may show higher attack rates when the school closure ends, contributing to community transmission of Covid-19,” they wrote. Other studies have also suggested that the large number of contacts for schoolchildren, who interact with dozens of others for a good part of the day, may cancel out their smaller risk of infecting others.

The researchers traced the contacts only of children who felt ill, so it’s still unclear how efficiently asymptomatic children spread the virus, said Caitlin Rivers, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins

Bloomberg School of Public Health.

“I think it was always going to be the case that symptomatic children are infectious,” she said. “The questions about the role of children are more around whether children who don’t have symptoms are infectious.”

Dr. Rivers was a member of a scientific panel that on Wednesday recommended reopening schools wherever possible for disabled children and for those in elementary schools, because those groups have the most trouble learning online. She said the new study does not alter that recommendation.

The study is more worrisome for children in middle and high school. This group was even more likely to infect others than adults were, the study found. But some experts said that finding may be a fluke or may stem from the children’s behaviors.

These older children are frequently as big as adults, and yet may have some of the same unhygienic habits as young children do. They may also have been more likely than the younger children to socialize with their peers within the high-rise complexes in South Korea.

“We can speculate all day about this, but we just don’t know,” Dr. Osterholm said. “The bottom line message is: There’s going to be transmission.”

He and other experts said schools will need to prepare for infections to pop up. Apart from implementing physical distancing, hand hygiene and masks, schools should also decide when and how to test students and staff — including, for example, bus drivers — when and how long to require people to quarantine, and when to decide to close and reopen schools.

But they face a monumental challenge because the evidence on transmission within schools has been far from conclusive so far, experts said. Some countries like Denmark and Finland have successfully reopened schools, but others, like China, Israel and South Korea, have had to close them down again.

“People, depending on their ideology on school opening, are choosing which evidence to present — and that needs to be avoided,” said Jeffrey Shaman, an epidemiologist at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health in New York.

Although the new study does not offer definitive answers, he said, it does indicate that schools can increase virus levels within a community.

“So long as children are not just a complete dead end — incapable of passing the virus on, which does not seem to be the case — putting them together in schools, having them mix with teachers and other students will provide additional opportunities for the virus to move from person to person,” he said.

At the same time, Dr. Shaman said, it’s important for children not to miss out on critical years in education and socialization, and school districts have the unenviable task of choosing between those options: “It’s hard trying to find the right balance.”

Next, here is an article from a teacher who sums up exactly how we and many other teachers feel. There are weblinks within the article.

Teacher's Take on Reopening Schools Goes Viral: "I Don't See ANY Consideration for the Adults"
"You're asking us to accept going back into classrooms in the middle of a pandemic."
By Audrey Goodson Kingo
Workingmother.com

July 6, 2020

As the beginning of the school year rapidly approaches in much of the country, many districts still haven't decided if students will attend in-person or not.

Working parents are worried about how they'll continue to juggle their job with online learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics, which released a statement that "strongly advocates" for in-person instruction, cited concerns about kids.

But a teacher for Charlottesville City Schools in Virginia says one very important group has been neglected during these very important discussions: teachers and other support staff who keep schools running.

"I don't see ANY consideration for the adults in school buildings in all the articles calling for schools to open," says Christine Esposito, who teaches 6th grade honors language arts, in a Facebook post that has now been shared over 6,000 times.

"I've seen the research. Kids are, as much as we can determine barely six months into a pandemic, less likely to get it. They're less likely to suffer from a severe form of the disease, possibly less likely to transmit it. The calls for opening schools with this data make total sense," she acknowledges, before pointing out the (literal) fatal flaw in this logic: Grown-ups help schools run, too, and they are *very* susceptible to COVID-19. She's not only worried about her own safety—she's worried about her parents, her fellow teachers, the custodial staff, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and instructional assistants who are far more likely to be BIPOC, and thus more likely to suffer severe complications.

"When you're out there demanding that schools open and all of your arguments are about you, about what you need, about what your kids need, but NEVER ONCE mention the dangers to the staff and faculty who will necessarily need to be in those schools, you can see where I'm a little concerned," she says.

The AAP's recommendations for reopening do provide some guidance on minimizing the spread of COVID-19 between adults in school settings. "Given what is known about transmission dynamics, adults and adult staff within schools should attempt to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other persons as much as possible, particularly around other adult staff," the statement reads.

The statement also suggests all meetings and curriculum planning take place virtually, and that schools should stagger pickups and dropoffs, if possible. "Physical barriers, such as plexiglass, should be considered in reception areas and employee workspaces where the environment does not accommodate physical distancing, and congregating in shared spaces, such as staff lounge areas, should be discouraged."

In her post, Christine makes a very salient point about those guidelines and others: Many public schools are already underfunded. How will districts pay for the protective gear and strategies that are needed to keep everyone safe?

"Since, for the entire two decades I've been teaching, we've been asking parents to donate basic school supplies because we can't or won't adequately fund education, you might see where we're a little hesitant to go back into those classrooms without masks, without face shields, because masks don't work with the littlest kids (though face shields really aren't nearly as effective as masks, but…), without any promise of reliable, regular testing with a quick turnaround of results, without any plan for what happens when someone gets sick, without any plan for what staff and faculty do when someone in their family is sick, without any

plan on how we help parents who need the childcare, so they're forced to give kids Tylenol in order to get through the temperature screening so they don't lose their job, without any promise of additional money to hire more teachers, to lease more space, to scale up what distance learning will or could look like," she says.

That being said, Christine knows that there's good reason to be worried about kids too. "I know they need to be back at school. I saw how distance learning went this spring. It wasn't pretty," she acknowledges. "We're going to be facing kids who are dealing with layer upon layer of trauma, we need to make time and space for that, so stop telling me kids are behind. They're not any further behind than anyone else. They're behind some arbitrary lines we drew in the sand so long ago we're not sure we remember why we drew them. We need to meet our kids where they are. ***I don't want to hear one word about testing, unless it involves a nasal or throat swab.*** Not. One. Word."

Christine's final thoughts sum up the grim situation perfectly: Kids and teachers are being asked to make sacrifices while other adults refuse to do so.

"The worst part about this is the completely cavalier attitude I see from far too many about doing what needs to be done if you have even half a prayer of opening schools this fall. Wear a mask. Stay home," she says. "If you can't do any of those things, but want me to go back to school in August with a smile on my face, you're asking me to make far bigger sacrifices than the ones you've been willing to make so far."

Please also note the paragraph about testing. That only adds to the trauma. At my (Keith's) school, we are giving students a 4.5 hour test on each of two half-days on the second week of school. And those days are only the third and fourth day since school begins. That is not how students should start their days back. And the reasoning behind it is because the HIDOE mandates that we give students assessments to find the gaps (the Return to Learn Principal's Handbook on the HIDOE website http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%202.pdf (Page 16, it says within the first two weeks of school). We all know where the gaps are. How about we teach the students, give assessment tasks within the lessons, and THEN report the gaps after a month or so? Why are we anxious to report data so soon?

We appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of COVID-19 in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. We, as teachers, are disheartened to hear us as being "a test case" for the rest of the nation. Yes, children may not get sick or critically ill, but they can be asymptomatic carriers that infect adults (especially at-risk adults like us) on campus. And then those educators' families will be put at risk too, especially if they care for kupuna (like we do). We do not want to be in the situation where we get the virus ***at all***. Regardless of how many medical facilities we have. **COVID-19 is not curable! Who knows what will happen to any one person who contracts it? We do not want to take that chance since we (and our kupuna that we take care of) are at-risk.** Even Dr. Bruce Anderson said at the most recent Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 hearing that we will probably have transmission in schools! It is a cavalier attitude by anyone who believes that statement AND still

wants schools to open that disregards any adult educator's health who is at-risk and high-risk (30-40% of educators).

We have to care for **ALL** people, not just a select few. Government is "for *the people*."

The only recourse teachers have is to take sick leave. "For how long?" our doctor asks. To which we can only say, "We don't know." A Quarter or a Semester? By which time we would probably use up our sick leaves. And can you see how a doctor would not feel comfortable approving sick leave when we are not actually sick? Our doctor told us that this is a first for him. Or apply for "disability" (following ADA guidelines) which we would not qualify (per our doctor) since we are only "at-risk" but not in the "high-risk" category. What other options would we have except to quit or retire early?

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns we have expressed.

Best regards,
Keith and Patricia Ishihara
Pearl City

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

Teacher Differentials

Jones Turner <jonesturner@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:04 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Greetings,

I understand that the state is hard pressed for money due to the Covid crisis. I wanted to e-mail you to let you know my perspective.

If you do not continue the differential payments for special education, there will be a larger shortage of teachers than you currently have. I took a $20,000 pay cut when I moved to Maui. I am invested in this community and want to stay and continue to serve the students I see each day. If this incentive is withheld, I will be forced to re-evaluate my job. The current pay scale for teachers in this state is drastically lower than the cost of living. If you want to retain and hire quality teachers for your children, I highly suggest you find a way to continue the differential for special education. Invest in your community.

Jones Turner
(808) 633-6222

Gmail

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

Differential

Pamela Hurley <hurleygirlie66@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
As a single parent, with a daughter heading off to college next year, I cannot imagine losing the differential. How could the BOE take back the money we were given?
Life is challenging enough today with Covid, Distance learning and the threat of a possible death sentence just by stepping back into the classroom to do the job I love.
Please do not dishonor teachers any further with this slap in the face, please.
Sincerely hoping you will reconsider,
Pamela Hurley
ELA Teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate School
(808)640-0264

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Claire Dobson <clairejdobson0@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my growing concern about the reopening of Hawaii's schools. I really don't see how any educated individual can justify putting our keiki and educators (not to mention their family members) in harm's way. We have a native Hawaiian population that we need to be protecting ACTIVELY. Covid-19 is a rapidly developing virus that we do not fully understand at this time. While myself and every educator I know of course wants to be back in the classrooms with our students, I fear we cannot do so without putting each other at risk at this time. For anyone who knows and understands how science, research, and data work - 7 months is very clearly not enough time for us to assume we get this or have it under control in any way. This is not how medicine or science work. Look at the surges going on all around our country. There are STILL people refusing to wear a mask who would be happy to travel here as soon as Hawai'i allows them to do so without a quarantine. How can we justify opening up now or really at all til cases in our country are managed? And how do we justify reopening now when we closed with far fewer cases going around? Have you read about the research and new side effects they are finding in survivors in Italy? Ones like hallucinations and psychosis that they aren't sure whether or not will last a lifetime? How can we come to this conclusion that gathering hundreds (and probably more on other campuses) of people together will end well? We should have been making these calls with caution back in March. We could have spent the last 4 and a half months, implementing an online program STATEWIDE and training educators on how to use this. We have wasted far too much precious time. We could have been prepping parents by letting them know VERY EARLY on that this was to be the plan. I am unsure how I, as a school counselor, will be able to convince children that they are safe in school. Safety is the absolute baseline needed for anyone to be able to really absorb and learn. I am genuine with my students. How can I hide this very real fear and try to convince them that despite everything we will magically not spread this on our campus? While I will be masked, sanitizing, and distancing - I will be heading into ~17 different classrooms from grades K-2. If I get sick, will we be quarantining all three grades who have potentially been exposed? We are rushing this extremely delicate decision and placing far too much on the shoulders of our already overwhelmed teachers. The ones we don't have enough of statewide already, remember them? We do not have the luxury of allowing this to get as bad as it has in other states. We do not have the resources and medical reach that other states do. Let Hawai'i CONTINUE to be an example to the rest of our country in handling this virus early and thoroughly. Let educators NATIONWIDE see how Hawai'i will back it's educators and it's students when times get tough. Perhaps this will lead to less shortages in the next few years once we DO understand this and have it under control.

Furthermore, to be considering taking away the promised "Hard to Staff Differentials" funding from teachers who have EARNED this - is an insult to every educator out there doing more than their share due to shortages. I work in a hard to staff school. The differential truly made me feel like the state actually cared about education and making things work for us despite everything. I have already signed my contract which includes my differential, if you turn around and take that away - is my contract still valid? Am I still expected to uphold my part in the contract if you aren't upholding yours? Do the right thing for our educators and our keiki. While I understand these decisions cannot be made lightly and that the issues are as complex as they are overlapping, we cannot risk lives for money. We have to come together as a community to learn how to not rely so heavily on tourism and how to better support those who live here on the Hawaiian islands. This is the only way we can turn this around and build a stronger and more stable Hawai'i. Please remember the educators and protect our keiki. Malama pono.

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

Gmail

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

Regarding the Shortage Differentials

Lauren Nix <nixalauren@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:18 PM

Dear Board of Education Representatives,

I am writing to you concerning the temporary discontinuance of the shortage differentials. I am a kindergarten teacher at Waianae Elementary School. I would like to give you some perspective on how cutting teacher pay will negatively impact teachers at our school and our community. For one, the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex side already has a history of the highest levels of teacher shortage and lowest levels of teacher recruitment and retention on the island. Cutting the hard to staff differentials will make schools that are difficult to staff even more difficult to staff. Secondly, schools in low socioeconomic communities across the island are known to have significant issues with student behaviors, poverty, and lack of funding. This year, schools are being forced to cut teachers resulting in larger classes sizes. In my experience, 15-20 kindergarten students without full-time assistance and minimal educator assistant support is a challenge itself. It will be further challenging to manage large class sizes with COVID-19 and the lack of adequate resources. Teachers will be forced to pay for class sets of masks and cleaning supplies. Lastly, students that receive SPED services may be impacted by this decision as the differentials brought attention to hard to staff locations and more qualified teachers are now serving in these areas. There are numerous reasons and data supporting why cutting the differentials will negatively impact schools and student achievement. I do not support this decision. Teachers deserve to be compensated fairly, and I propose that there be an alternative solution rather then suspending the shortage differentials that does not harm educator and student livelihoods in hard to staff locations.

Mahalo,
Lauren Nix

Testimony regarding pay differentials

Ann Morris <greatsons3@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As my testimony to the Board of Education regarding the proposal to discontinue the established pay differentials for Special Education and hard to fill locations, I would first like to speak to the personal impact it will have on me as a Special Education teacher, and expand on that to the possible implications it may have on the system as a whole.

I recently accepted a new position at a hard to staff school. Much of my substation for doing so was based on the implied good faith belief that the differentials were to remain in place. It is in a more isolated location where the cost of living, especially in rentals, is significantly higher, that the differential is intended to offset. I have now committed to that location, along with a rental, and suddenly the possibility that what I thought was a reciprocated commitment by my employer to address additional cost, may no longer be in place. If this were to happen, based in my personal circumstances of being single without a network of personal outside support, the likelihood that I will be forced to return to the mainland in order to survive financially, is extremely high. Unfortunately, I feel that would be a lose/lose situation for both myself and the HIDOE. I have invested a great deal to the benefit of this community as a devoted and certified Special Education teacher, and would hope that would be honored in how this situation is handled.

With that said, I would imagine (actually personally know based on conversations) this same scenario can be extrapolated to a significant percentage of other teachers' circumstances, ultimately to some extent having a negative impact on the system as a whole.

An abundance of dedicated teachers in HI have historically found it difficult to financially stay afloat with the comparatively low wages in relation to the high cost of living (a large reason the differentials were original proposed and implemented). A high percentage of teachers have had to work second jobs, many in the retail and tourism related industries, in order to get by with a somewhat comfortable way of life. With most of those opportunities being currently suspended, and possibly gone, the differentials at least filled a gap that still made it workable. If those are also discontinued, I am sure many teachers would face impossible choices, and may find themselves in the same circumstance of having to vacate.

In the shadow of the Felix Consent Decree that saw the state of Hawaii scrambling to find creative ways to invest in the aggressive recruitment, training, and retention of certified Special Education teachers in order to meet federal requirements to provide adequate services in the state of Hawaii, this proposal to discontinue the pay differentials, especially under the exaggerated circumstances affecting Special Education practices, seems very counter productive.

You are essentially asking Special Education teachers to face uncharted territory in the forms of:
*Increased work loads having to write, and potentially continuously having to rewrite, legally binding documents in the form of IEPs to address the ever evolving student needs in relation to the specific circumstances of this crisis, while also finding increasingly creative ways to implement the objectives.

*The probability of looming Due Process and Class Action filings based on services not appropriately received during school closures, and the multitude of requests for compensatory services.

*An ever increasing complexity to the delivery and implementation of SPED services with the expectations to include more clinically therapeutic approaches (such as ABA) needing to successfully be integrated into the framework of an academic system.

*SPED teachers very possibly having increased exposure to health risks during the pandemic time in which you would like to suspend differentials, based on the nature of the unique need for more in-person instruction to this vulnerable population.

And now on top of all that, you are asking SPED teachers to maneuver these increasingly difficult and stressful obstacles at a less than anticipated wage, leaving them more vulnerable to worry over financial difficulty!

I understand the tendency, especially in a crisis, to gravitate to the easiest and most immediate answers, in this case being suspension of the pay differentials, but before just arbitrarily doing that, I would implore you to take into account and investigate the many extenuating facets that could ultimately have more far reaching and negative consequences to this solution. It may very briefly and temporarily relieve budget concerns, but have much higher costs down the road in the forms of having to rebuild a Special Education program that meets federal guidelines, and in having non-certified teachers

in precarious positions if legal actions are initiated.

Ultimately, if it is determined that the cost ratio risk outweighs the inherent problems in this solution, it would feel much more respectful if it were implemented in a way that allows the affected teachers to look into and plan for possible ways to compensate, with an interim buffer of time in place prior to the differentials being discontinued.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ann Morris
Special Education Teacher
King Kamehameha III Elementary School
Lahaina, Hawaii

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Proposal for Shortage Differentials

Gina Cacchioli <gcacchioli@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Gina Cacchioli, and I am currently a 2nd grade teacher at Makaha Elementary school, in the Waianae Complex. This school is considered to be in a hard-to- staff location. I see the vulnerable and struggling students and their families in our community, especially during this difficult time with COVID-19.

As a member of HSTA, I was saddened and disappointed by the proposal to cut the shortage differentials I have received. Although I do love my school and community, and genuinely value my experience as an educator there, my job can be taxing and difficult. Although rewarding, teaching is already a stressful profession that is often under appreciated. In a complex like Nannakuli/Waianae, many schools are Title I and have limited funds. This can make the jobs of school faculty a bit more difficult. The shortage differential helped solidify my desire to stay and serve in this area.

I would love to stay here and serve this community further, but it can prove to be financially difficult. This differential helped me financially as Hawaii is an expensive place to live - especially being from the mainland on the East Coast.

These shortage differentials help show appreciation for many teachers in the State of Hawaii, who are very needed by the keiki. I understand that COVID-19 has had a financial and physical impact on many, but cutting the differentials for teachers is not the way to help solve this unfortunate situation.

Please consider these reasons and let us keep this shortage differentials. I see how hard the staff of my school works to help the children who need it the most. Don't let our hard work go unnoticed.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Gina Cacchioli

TESTIMONY

Julie ko <julieko6866@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I'm a teacher at an elementary school and I love my job. However, it's very scary to be opening our schools in less than 2 weeks. Currently, I am thinking about using up my savings and taking a leave without pay for a year. I feel as if I need to choose to value my family's life or be able to pay my bills. I never thought in a million years that being a teacher would be such a dangerous job. I'm sure you heard our senator's valid concerns and the questions they asked Kishimoto during their recent COVID Task Committee Meeting. If you haven't please watch the meeting. I'm so glad that they asked her the hard questions and she was doing her best to give politically correct answers. She NEVER gives a direct answer! I was also very disappointed that Kishimoto gave some false impressions to the senators and here are some examples.

1. When questioned about providing training to teachers and staff, she said many teachers participated. This is totally false! How can we have had any training when teachers are on summer break and have NOT been in school? She had a few voluntary sped. webinars but that is pretty much it. As a teacher, I don't know what I am supposed to do if one of my students tests positive for COVID? No training! The 9 HALF days she keeps referring are NOT enough. We will have to been trained on distance learning, new sanitary protocols, new schedule, new curriculum, technology training, grade-level meetings, and much more. How can we train and teach at the same time. We have to ask questions and have time to make adjustments based on collaborative suggestions.
2. Parents didn't get any information regarding protocols or school procedures. Our school is rushing to get a parent handbook out and probably will be ready for first week of school. They should get it way before school opens so we can answer concerns or questions. Many parents don't even speak English so we have to make sure they understand their responsibilities. This takes time.
3. It is really frustrating when Kishimoto compares summer school hubs as a testing measure to reopening schools. I'm glad Senator Kim pointed out the difference. Having only 3 students versus having a class of 22 students??? Having a total school population of 20 versus 700- 3,000 students??? She or Dr. Park mentioned that we would have 10-12 students in a bubble classroom?? REALLY? I WOULD LOVE THAT! Once again proving that they have NO idea what is happening in the schools. Schools are still in the planning stages. I received absolutely no training. We didn't even get any PPEs. NOTHING!!
4. Dr. Andersen said that he is willing to bet that schools will have positive cases yet teachers are asked to go into a classroom every day with a population of 20 or more. How does that making HEALTH AND SAFETY A PRIORITY when you are sending students and teachers back to school knowing this? Then he adds that it's okay because children are less likely to get it severely. I'm so sick and tired of hearing this like my life and my family's life is so trivial. Maybe if we planned better then we can reduce the likelihood of schools getting COVID and Dr. Andersen won't have to be a betting man. Senator Favella said, what is the rush??? He hit it right on the nail!! Schools are rushing and because they are, they will make mistakes. I'm starting to set up my classroom but enrollment keeps changing so I have to redo things. Again, schools need more time. Parents don't understand what's going on because of the rush. Only now DOE is figuring out what platform they will be using for 100% Distance Learning. I don't see any sanitizing stations around the school or safe protocols established. If we have poor training then you will see poor results.
5. Dr. Green said publicly that we don't have enough contact tracers and Dr. Andersen is betting that schools will see positive cases. How does this make sense?
6. I've heard the BOE question DOE many times what's taking so long coming out with guidelines. Yes, they took very long! The schools are scrambling right now trying to open Aug. 4th. We need to be mindful and collaborate with teachers and staff of protocols but because teachers are not there, we are not involved. Teachers will be returning back July 29th. Then give the schools time to plan collaboratively so we can all embrace safety protocols.
7. COVID is changing every day. They are learning that children are contracting and spreading the virus. 31% of children under 18 tested positives in Florida and the health department there is recognizing the significance of it. Can you imagine if school was opened and the 31% of students infected their peers and teachers? Hawaii is not doing well our cases are going, more deaths, and

hospitalizations. We might think it's only 24 deaths but what if it was your loved ones. Teachers all over the world are dying! Why do they have to when we have options. Is education really more important than life?? Your great education can't be used if you are dead. On a sad note, Teachers are being told to make sure we have a living will and a medical executor before we start working. What has our world come to? It may sound extreme but it's reality. By going doing face-to-face teaching, it is playing Russian Roulette because you never know who is bringing the virus to school. We may have some control in school but not what happens at home.

Please listen to the Senators, teachers, and parents and push back the opening date or do a phased-in plan. There are so many more options that other states are using. Why do we have to be the guinea pigs? I don't understand what the rush is? Why is August 4th the magic number? The BOE needs to step back and reassess the current COVID situation. The decisions made last month is now obsolete because of what is happening in our state. Our cases are increasing, more deaths, more hospitalizations, and they are learning that COVID has lifelong effects such a lung scarring. We need action and for the BOE to really think about what is best. Life or a different way to educating our children until we have a vaccine. It will not be forever because our lives will return to some sort of normalcy soon.

Thank you,
Julie L.

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

G. Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation

Lisa Anderson <lisa.anderson@k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 1:49 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board,

I am strongly opposed to the discontinuance of extra compensation for hard to staff geographical locations, special education, etc. Why must teachers always be the ones to take the hit anytime there is a shortfall? Quite frankly, when we have given up anything, it is never "temporary". I have seen very capable teachers come and go at our school on a regular basis. There is already a huge teacher shortage and with COVID, I can only see it getting worse as teachers chose to retire over health concerns and less pay. What additional, small compensation teachers receive in these hard to place areas is really an incentive to stay. Further, teachers continue to teach in underfunded, broken down classrooms, and continue to use their own money and time to provide for students. I strongly oppose the discontinuance of the differentials. Not only does this proposal penalize teachers, but ultimately it is the students who will suffer the most in the long run, make no mistake about that.

Sincerely,

Lisa R. Anderson
lisa.anderson@k12.hi.us

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Shatoya Allen <tabeauty1216@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 2:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Regarding Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

___

According to the HIDOE's own data teacher shortage differentials were/are working and yet the BOE want to suspend them. Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas. Why would you cut a program that works? It defies logic. Hawaii is already facing a severe shortage of qualified teachers, why cut a known program that works? Historically, "temporary cuts" almost always end up being permanent and it would be incredibly short-sighted to cut the program now. It is simply the wrong decision and will hurt our kids.

Thank you,
Shatoya Allen

July 19th, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Aloha My name is Hanalei Conda. First and foremost I just want to say how thankful I am that you all are working so hard to keep our aina, keiki , and community safe. I understand there are so many factors that weigh into decisions. Mahalo. I'm writing this letter as a concerned parent and Teacher.

I currently have 6 children under my care 2 of my own and 4 that we just recently got custody of. This has been such a trying time for everybody and as a parent I am so proud of how well they have dealt with all of this. As a parent I feel very nervous about sending my kiddos to school. They are all in a different grade and they will all be exposed to different "bubbles". The idea of keeping to a "bubble" is very ridiculous to me. I understand that kids need to be in school but the way school is, will be completely different and weird for them, I feel they won't get much out of it. Much less the Elementary, Intermediate, and Highschool are all saying no Distance learning. The inter and high school that my older kids attend has just sent a letter home saying they will be going 1 day a week and they watching the SAME lesson taught 3 other times on a stream. That is very frustrating for me as I've always stressed how important "stretching your brain is" My kids are al on the higher side of academics and this will just bring them down way more. They will be getting ⅕ of the education. I'm concerned for all the kids attending there as well. No matter what level of learning you are at this method will just bore them. They will also all get exposed to a whole bunch of different people regardless of Bubbles (My kids are pretty good about following directions as well). Another issue is Childcare. I've been watching my sister- in laws child while she's at work and she will still have to work, along with any other person I know. And because I have 6 pickups and drop offs can only be done by my car due to seats. If I can find someone in my ohana Bubble to watch them they will not be doing any school stuff because the adult would not be able to help. This leaves them up to it by themselves. I have also not filled any surveys out since the end of May and that is when cases were low. Now that they are on the Rise I am not comfortable with my kids doing face to face instruction.

As a teacher, I was told that I am Directed to be on campus every day, Masks aren't required, There will be NO distance learning (It was not part of the options ??) if parents want that they can do homeschool. We were also told no changes to the bell schedule will be made. No temp checks, and if teachers are high risk there's things they can do? If a child is sick send them to the health room (our health aide is at high risk herself) if the kid is sent back and still sick we can call parents. We can attend meetings virtually but it has to be on campus (we have a small campus). Class rooms will be sanitized daily (yet our wednesday is for sanitization and we only have 3 custodians). Our school has not received any training that Dr, Kishimoto has referred to. I feel very nervous about going back into the classroom, seeing all the cases on the rise.

I am so torn as an educator. I usually feel so excited and now all I feel is anxiety. I don't want to leave my school kids, But I also have to do what's best for my family. If we distance

taught for the first quarter then reassessed after Labor day and decided its good to go, maybe can do a weekly switch then kids get established in classrooms as well as have a week of work to do at home. (EX: Group A first week Group B second week and continue on) I feel this would be better for working families too, they could get full weeks in at work and not have to switch days consistently all the time.

Thank you so much for listening. I really appreciate all your doing.

Mahalo nui,
Hanalei Conda

Gmail

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

Keep the differential

J Fernandez <jessica.sonia.fernandez@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 2:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This is hard times for everyone but taking money out of teacher's pockets isn't going to fix anyone's problems but it will surely make times harder for teachers and others in our community who are working so hard to do an already difficult job that is even harder due to covid19. Please keep the differential for special education teachers and hard to staff areas.

Thank you,
Jessica Fernandez
Preschool Special Education Teacher
Haleiwa Elementary School

Dear Board of Education,

I have worked for the Department of Education for over twenty one years. Six of those years as Special Education teacher. It's been a long road with lots of sacrifices from me and my entire family. None of which I am complaining about, but sharing so that you can understand my frustration.

I am a life skills teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School. I have a wonderful team and great support from my administrator. We have built a strong and successful program throughout the years and have come to work hand in hand with different parents.

As we are going through a pandemic I have stuck to my commitment and continue to work with my students and their families to ensure a safe and protected environment during ESY. I do ESY not for the money but so that I am able to work with my new incoming students, and better plan out a successful plan for when the new school year starts.

This ESY has been a great challenge as we are enduring the safety issues, developing an entire change within the classroom of building an isolation room for a new student that has anger issues, another student who is in a wheelchair and limited in communication, then another student who has seizures. That's not all, another student struggles with communication, anger issues, and limited cognitive comprehension. With this four you need to mix in six other students with high needs. Hope you are starting to see the picture of having eleven students in one room.

Please don't get me wrong! They are not the problem, a limited room space causes difficulties is providing proper care for all of them at the same time. Limited seating

causes issues with being able to follow CDC guidelines. Planning for each one of them to be successful takes great imagination and a lot of collaboration with others to ensure we have everything we need to be able to meet their needs.

So, what is the problem! I have spent every minute during my summer break to ensure my room is redesigned to care for each of these student's needs. I spend more time in my room gathering curriculum for each student so that I have what I need for them when they start. I spend time calling, emailing, and texting other professionals collaborating so that these parents' questions are answered. Out of eleven students I will have this coming school year, four of them are transitioning to a new environment, their parents are afraid and unsure of their safety. The other six student's parents have already been with us for a year and they trust what we say, but with the daily changes in the DOE it is difficult to help them when I myself is unable to get a straight answer to what will happen. Again, the problem is we can only get paid seven hours total for one student even if your work more than seven hours a day. Not fare, I would say so.

That's what brings me to this letter, I am tired, and I am tired of defending myself to the Board of Education and the Department of Education. I'm tired of staying up late and night to finish an IEP, I'm tired of juggling four different IEP's that are due within a week of each other. I'm tired of having to hold my staff up with no one else will listen about difficulties managing their lunch breaks, so to ensure they are safe I have to cover all the lunch breaks so that these women will have a moment to sit and eat. I'm tired of balancing out daily coverage when someone is out sick. I'm tired of sticking myself out there to take good record keeping of each student so that I never have to go through due process as I had to do my first year as a teacher because of a transferring student

who brought it with him when he entered our school. I'm tired of justifying why I can't increase my pay by taking PD classes because I have no extra time in the day because I'm too busy preparing for another student to enter. I'm tired!

I have always loved my job, I love the students I get to work with no matter what their disabilities are. I love working with their parents offering any information or help so that they can have some type of relief. It's hard to continue to love your job when it's always being attack for pay cuts.

To say that you want to take away the increase really hurts, for the first time in years I thought how thoughtful you were to think of the special education teachers and the struggles we have in enduring a passionate position with limited compensation. Taking that increase from me will be the last straw. I can't understand the logic to it, and I won't subject myself to anymore sacrifices. When I was growing up we learned at an early age that when you give someone something you don't ask for it back. Maybe our problems today is that we have no true values, true wholesome values that our children can see and stand by. So, with that said I hope that you will see that taking back our increase is not the answer, you are only making it harder to want to come to work and do a job that is worthwhile. You are pushing people to quite, I mean this for myself, and I am so tired of defending myself to people who has not taken the time to come into the classroom and see what is being done.

The pandemic has been tough, not only on the students, but their families and also on teachers. It's a tough time for all of us, but taking away our increase is just not fair. That is why I wrote this testimony to let you know there is so much going on, I feel the weight on my shoulders and has stayed firm in my commitment, even when you have

not. Taking this increase will really show your commitment to us as teachers. There is so much at stake here, I hope that you will make the right decision for all the educators who trust you to ensure we are treated fare because if you fail us I know for myself I'm not going to be taken advantage of any more. No matter how hard it is to walk away for my job you will leave me no choice but either transfer to another position or leave the profession. It's just not fair to give us an increase and then take it away.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Sherri Martinez <sherrimartinez46@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 2:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to ask for teacher differentials to continue for hard-to-staff educator positions, Action Item G.

I earned a dual Bachelor's Degree in elementary and special education in 1994 and was a mainland recruit "that made it happen." Most mainland recruits left within one school year of arriving. I just completed my 26th year of teaching. Since 1994, I have earned three master's degrees. I earned a master's degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Then, I went on to earn a master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado in Special Education: Vision and Orientation and Mobility. Since 1999, I have been a Teacher of the Visually Impaired in Central District. Currently, I am the only Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist in North Central District.

In 2012, a colleague moved to New York City, which is the largest school district in the nation. Like me, he is a Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. He is a 10-month teacher and earns a higher salary than me. (I am a 12-month teacher.) The shorter differential of $10,000 made a world of difference. I was considering a move to the mainland until the approval of the differential in January, 2020.

I am reasonable and understand the economic situation our state is facing. In addition, my husband and I will start paying college tuition for two children in August. One son will be attending Kapiolani Community College. Another son will start at Northern Arizona University. The $10,000 differential makes a world of difference for my family. At the age of 47 years, I could take an early retirement, not collect, and move to the mainland for a special educator position.

Please approve the Hard-to-Staff Differential. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony!

Sherri Martinez
sherrimartinez46@gmail.com

TO: Hawaii State Board of Education
Catherine Payne, Chair

FROM: Charles and Karen Mahelona
Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii

MEETING DATE: Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: Action Item G: Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year

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

We wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that we are opposed to the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers as listed above, which will absolutely devastate our continuous dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable and needy keiki. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable haumāna (students) who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Our children, and subsequently the majority of our grandchildren, have been and are being educated in our public schools. They were and are fortunate in having excellent, experienced, and caring teachers that have given them a positive attitude toward school and learning.

It is our understanding that the differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas.

We understand that these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has negatively impacted the State's overall revenue and budget. But we also understand that over the years, it seems the State always looks to cut the education budget first, which makes no sense to us since all of the keiki are our future and they should have the best education to be able to carry on as our future leaders. Having the best education obviously means having the best educators.

During this pandemic everyone is talking about and praising our front-line workers, which they should. But they are neglecting to include our teachers in that group of front-line workers, and even more so now during this pandemic when everyone wants schools to open and it's the teachers who are most at risk. They've already spent an abundance of hours to set up online learning during the last few months and now have to, on their own and apparently with not much direction from the DOE or their school administrators, come up with the best ways to run their classes and still be able to follow the CDC and local State guidelines.

It is very frustrating for us, as taxpayers, to see that education appears to be at the bottom of the list for receiving the tax dollars they need to be able to have one of the best public education systems. Every year when the national education statistics come out, Hawaii is always at the bottom of the list and what's even more frustrating is that everyone knows why and yet nothing is done.

This falls on our State Legislators, State Administration, State DOE and BOE to do something about it. And a great way to start is by honoring your initial pledge to pay shortage differentials to the educators in these three areas with the worst shortages, and your additional pledge to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if State lawmakers did not fund it for the next school year, which they did not and shame on them.

We will also be writing to Ron Kouchi, State Senate President, to find out why the State Legislature did not approve this. I'm not sure how you presented your request to the Legislature, but because of the importance of this issue for our public schools, I would think if all three entities (DOE, BOE, HSTA) worked together and presented it together to the State Legislature that it would have had an impact.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration of our testimony on this very important issue.

Charles K. Mahelona and Karen E. Mahelona
P.O. Box 338, Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii 96746
Home Phone: 808-822-4246

Gmail

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

Concerns

Lisa Johnstone <lajohnstone@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 3:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE Members,
I am writing you today to provide testimony on two matters, the opening of school and the special education differentials.
Opening of Schools:
Schools with skeleton crews and skeleton information are being asked to open in a few short weeks. We are working towards reopening without even an approved reopening plan. Unions are still negotiating and disagreeing. Schools are doing their best to buy PPE, cleaning and sanitizing supplies all with our regular school budgets. We are told to keep track of what we spend however no money has been given. I appreciate the effort of the board to say that the state should procure the supplies and the schools get from the state but that isn't happening, not yet and we are running out of time. We are opening in a few weeks, welcoming teachers back sooner and we aren't ready. We need more time. Teachers will have two days to set their classrooms up. This year that includes figuring out what to do with all the extra furniture. Half of which will be unused and taking up much needed space with only half the students in a classroom. And those two days are also to prepare for an unprecedented school year. They need more time. The other two days are admin days. We will do our best to provide as much training as possible in those two days which have challenges in themselves because teachers don't have to physically go to any meetings. I have heard the superintendent say over and over that they have provided training to teachers. My question is when? How did you advertise this training? Am I missing something? I have seen some previous training when I've searched for it on the DOE website but really how hard is it to send out an email to all teachers advertising the training? We are on one gmail system. Almost every school will be on some blended rotating schedule this will take planning and professional development. When is this supposed to happen? The superintendent says in the first two weeks of school but is that realistic? We need more time. I have listened way too many time to the superintendent say things that are half truths if that. Many times her exaggerations seem like outright lies to us working day in and day out through this thing. I could go one and one here but I won't. I don't feel safe doing so. Has the board asked principals if they are ready? Has the superintendent asked principals if they are ready? Has she reached out to principals ever in this? The one webinar she did we sat there myself as a teacher leader and thought wow ok you just told us what happened in the past six weeks that we were aware of as we lived it. Tell us something new. She shared more with the parent group she had than with the principals or school staff. Did she ask anyone when she decided to just do enrichment activities? Poll schools? See if access was really a problem we couldn't solve? But Dr. Kishimoto is always talking in the news. Ready to speak to the media often saying things that make the schools think what? But I thought?? Or talking in circles not answering the questions. As an employee it's been frustrating to hear everything in the media. I wish we were trusted enough to be told things before it hits the media. Share with us what's going on. I think this would help teachers to feel safe and supported. We are rushing back to school yet many state level and district level people are still teleworking. I've been at work every day since we were told to return on June 1. Why isn't everyone else? Is it not safe for them yet safe for school to open up.
The bottom line is we need more time. Dr. Anderson said to the senate committee if principals aren't ready then they shouldn't reopen. If only it were that simple. We are planning for a reopening with a limited staff with a document that isn't even approved by the BOE. I ask that you strongly consider pushing the start date back for students or at least starting the year virtually and phasing back in so we can be more prepared. Cases are higher now than when the schools shut down but yet we are acting like everything is fine and we are all ready to go. Please give us more time.

Special Education Differentials:
In the beginning I thought these differentials were crazy because not all special education teachers are created equal. Sad but true. However we have lost many great sped teachers to general Ed because the paperwork and headaches are worse than the larger classes and caseload. Then you approved the differentials to retain teachers and also to entice some of the dual certified teachers back to sped and it worked. To take that away now after they committed at least for the year to stay in sped or come back to sped is totally a bait and switch. You don't want to offer it after this year, that's fine but to pull it now when teachers made a change to support the students and assist their schools is just not right. The other differentials don't bother me as much but to take from the teacher that agreed to move back to sped or stay one more year is just wrong. I ask that you please approve the differentials for this coming year.
I thank you for your time. I have many more things I could share but I have more of my career to do and do not want to be black balled.
Thank you!
Lisa

Gmail

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

Testimony for Thursday, July 23, at 1:30 p.m.

Taryn Reiner <tarynreiner@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 3:19 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Board of Education,
My name is Taryn Reiner and I am a School Counselor at Konawaena High School. This is my testimony on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I have been a loyal employee, in the same complex, for 12 years now. My children have attended public school since pre-K because I believe in our school system. Our school system has made awesome increases in our test scores and in the education we provide our Keiki. Growing up on the mainland and working as a School Counselor in three mainland states, nothing compares to Hawaií culture, community, and education.

After my divorce, I relocated my children to Hawaií and I still remain a single parent in a single household income. I live paycheck to paycheck due to the cost of living. I was affected by the last furloughs and my take-home pay still has not recovered. Before furloughs, I was bringing home $1,900.00 per paycheck, after the furloughs, I was bringing home $1,500.00 per paycheck, with the differential pay I now bring home $1,600.00. $200.00 more a month makes a difference but it is still not enough to send my children to college. I stayed for the 2020-2021 school year due to the differential pay and the near future increase in salary. I will be leaving Hawaií after this school year if differential pay and increase in salary is taken away.

My education, my retirement, and my childrenś post-secondary education are worth more than the pay I receive in Hawaií!

None of us work in education for the money yet all of us help raise positive community contributors. Our salary is used to help feed and clothe our students. Our salary is used to make our classrooms a safe place to learn. Our hearts know it takes a village!

People stay in a village when they feel like they belong when they are appreciated for the efforts they contribute. For years/decades, the State of Hawaií has not appreciated our efforts. Especially now when we are being pushed back to school in unsafe circumstances.

We know there is a shortage of teachers, school counselors, and substitutes. We are willing to sacrifice our lives to protect our students but during this pandemic, it will not only be our lives, but it will also be the lives of our family members.

If differential pay and salary increases are taken away, how is one to feel a sense of belonging in the DOE?

Gmail

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

Hard to fill bonuses

Donna Hallock <dhallock53@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 3:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I teach at Na'alehu elementary school. I have one year to retire and am terrified to go back to work with the threat of covid. Please at least keep the original 3,000 that we were getting. I may have to figure out how to retire now. Many of our teachers drive more than 120 miles each day to teach at our school.

Testimony to continue funding teacher shortage differentials

Katie Sherick <katieS15@outlook.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 3:47 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello, my name is Katie Sherick and I am a 1st grade teacher in Waianae.

I am writing to urge you to continue funding the teacher shortage differentials.

I graduated from college a year ago and decided that I wanted to teach in a hard to staff area of Oahu. I know that the keiki here need teachers that will work hard for them and go above and beyond. The teacher shortage differential is effective in getting more high quality teachers in the hard-to-staff positions. Without the differential, many teachers will leave the hard to staff positions, not because they don't have the heart to be there, but simply because these teachers are trying to make a living and there is large amount of extra time and energy that goes into these positions. Without the differential, the high-quality educators that are gradating from college with the fresh knowledge and extra energy are less likely to choose to work in a hard-to-staff school.

OUR KEIKI NEED HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS, and this teacher shortage differential helps get the best teachers for them. Without the differential it would be heart breaking to see our students lose the great teachers that they need now more than ever.

Teachers in hard-to-staff positions go above and beyond in many areas which is why the differential is fair and beneficial. To name a few examples of teachers putting in extra time into their jobs:

-Teachers spend extra time caring for the students who deal with trauma at home. This looks like meeting with students after school to provide support, giving up personal lunch time to meet with students, and spending extra time planning social and emotional lessons or calm down strategies.

-Teachers spend extra time to provide supports for students who are far behind grade level. Finding ways to drastically differentiate for students is necessary but adds hours to what it already takes to plan lessons.

-Teachers spend extra time attempting to communicate with families. It is difficult to have one streamlined system for parent communication, so teachers spend extra time making various attempts to make critical contacts with families.

The differentials are crucial for both keiki and teachers. Families, teachers and students urge you to continue funding the differentials.

Thank you,

Katie Sherick

Gmail

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

Differential

JENNY Stevens <casey1118@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 4:06 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,
I'm writing in support of continuing teachers differential pay. Now more then ever, as we plan to go back to school, we need the continued funds. Many teachers pay for classroom items out of our pockets. With the pandemic, I'm sure many of us will be purchasing added cleaning and sanitary items for our classes and our own safety. Among many other things, we will need our differential pay!
Mahalo!
Jenny Stevens

Jenny Stevens iPhone

Gmail

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

testimony

Nancy Parker <rowdycru2@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 4:14 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

I am emailing you concerning the Action Item G. I currently teach special education at Kipapa Elementary School. I work with students that have severe disabilities. Many times these children need my assistance with modeling and hand-over-hand instruction. This puts me in close proximity to my students to be an effective teacher. Most of these students come form low-income, multi-family homes which are some of the most at risk populations for contracting COVID-19 according to the CDC. With me working in close proximity to my students most would agree that I am in a hazardous field. Also being over the age of 55 puts me even closer to the high risk groups. I understand the the pay differential that we as sped teachers have worked so hard for may no longer be offered. This does not add up being that I am working in a high risk environment (COVID-19 and close proximity). If anything I should be offered compensation for working in a high-risk environment during the age of COVID. In addition to working in close proximity to students, I also have a student that spits continuously. Part of it is his behavior, but he is also impulsive and does not necessarily consider what he is doing. This puts me and anyone else that comes in contact with my student. For teachers like me, we are putting ourselves seriously at risk. At least with the compensation, I felt like I was working to make a very out of ordinary student as close to his peers that don't have these behaviors. The compensation has kept me in my job and kept me from reconsidering other jobs that pay just as much or more, and I would not have to worry about someone spitting on me during the age of Covid.

For my colleagues that work in hard-to-staff areas, the differential should still be made available for them. Most of these kids again are from high risk environments being that they come from multi-family homes. You are asking a lot of your teachers by putting them in a hazardous environment.

I hear that students are not so susceptible to this disease and even if they get it, they recover quickly often without symptoms. Not much is being said about the teachers who have a high population of at risk because of age and underlying conditions. We have been relegated to being pawns in this political game.

I am asking that you reconsider your position of taking away the differential for our teachers of high risk students. This should not be an option when it comes to education our keiki. I have been and still am considering another field. Please reopen the schools safely and without taking teacher pay from difficult to staff positions. Mahalo,

Nancy Parker
Special Education Teacher
Kipapa Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Emi Morita <emorita96744@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 4:14 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am in opposition to opening schools in August when the covid numbers are rising.

Emi Aukai
Parent

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michael Kline <mikekline999@msn.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 4:29 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I ask that you reject this proposal.

I have taught Special Education in Hawai'i for 21 years now. I have been National Board Certified since 2003. I love teaching and I love my students. On Dec. 5, Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. The BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages. During the meeting, Superintendent Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year. Now, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when we especially need strong schools for our students with disabilities, you are considering discontinuing the extra compensation that has retained and brought into Special Education more teachers. Why would you want to break your pledge and purposely undo what has worked for our students with disabilities? Our students with disabilities is a focus group for as much in-person schooling as possible because they are the ones who have the most to lose during these difficult times. This is clear. We need to guarantee that they receive the IEP services that they are entitled to by federal law and not jeopardize this by discontinuing the extra compensation that has been shown to retain and attract Special Education teachers. Surely, there are other areas that the BOE can look at to cut during these times.

Also, If you discontinue the extra compensation for not only Special Education teachers, but also hard-to-staff locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs, you will also be hurting the economy as we will not contribute as much to Hawai'i's economy and no longer be able to afford to spend our own money on behalf of our students. Also, because of the pandemic and the difficulties of teaching virtually and now in person with social distancing, I bet many Special Education teachers who are close to retirement will elect to retire at this point creating a shortage of Special Education teachers in the state.

Please, reject the proposal of discontinuing the extra compensation and look elsewhere for cuts. Our students with disabilities deserve and require the services in their IEP's. Our Special Education teachers deserve to be paid for the difficult and time-consuming work they do on behalf of our students.

Michael Kline
Special Education Preschool Teacher
Kilauea School on the island of Kaua'i

Gmail

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

testimony for July 23, 2020 meeting item VI(G)

Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 5:02 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

July 23, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Testimony for BOE Agenda, July 23, 2020,1:30 p.m., Agenda Item VI(G): Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical location, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

I am a recently retired teacher from Lincoln Elementary. Prior to that, I worked for the Department of the Attorney General, and at one time, I served the Department of Education. I am writing to ask that the Board of Education and Department of Education continue to support the differential for teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian immersion in the next year.

Schools have trouble attracting and hiring certified special education teachers, and it is not uncommon for a teacher who is not certified in special education to be placed in such a classroom because a certified teacher cannot be found. This means that the school will need to send out a letter telling parents that their teacher is not certified. In the past, when I represented the DOE in special education hearings, a teacher's lack of certification was used as grounds to challenge the adequacy of their child's education.

The differential has made a difference in attracting more teachers into the special education field, but there is still a shortfall, and it is still needed. Further, the teachers who have moved into special education are relying on the differential in the next year, and for many teachers, $10,000 can be life changing. A teacher I know was hired for a regular education classroom, and then was told by her principal that she would instead be assigned to a special education class, although she was not certified for special education. On her own, the teacher took the steps to become certified in special education for next year, knowing that a letter about her lack of certification then would not be needed, and hoping to better serve the school, while qualifying for the differential.

I understand that we are facing difficult financial times. However, the need for special education teachers continues and having a qualified teacher in a special education classroom is better for our students and helps with other issues, like litigation. The differential helps to attract and keep teachers in special education and we should do our utmost to honor our commitment to them.

Sincerely,
Lynn M. Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii

Gmail

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

Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teacher in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for school year 2020-2021

Maile French <halia36@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 5:11 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Maile French. I am a Moderate to Severe needs Special education Teacher at Central Middle school. I have worked in special education for 25 years. I moved to Central Middle school this past year. The class I am teaching had a long term sub for a few years and I felt compelled to move and give these MOST VULNERABLE and HIGHEST NEEDS students a teacher who would do their best to support, encourage, and have these students succeed to be the best persons they are able to be.

I strongly encourage you to NOT discontinue the compensation for these ALL hard to staff positions. This will be devastating to children in special education who have needed qualified and dedicated teachers who will want to remain educating these most vulnerable in Hawaii DOE. You know this is not right. You know the severe short term as well has the long term implications this will cause. There are not enough of us to help them as it is and the demands have only INCREASED on the teachers of these again most vulnerable and highest needs students.

On a personal level this is so devastating to my family as a single mother supporting 3 school age children, whom attend pubic school. We have made financial decisions based on this compensation and it frightens me to know what implications it will have on my family. A long with the continued threats by the governor to cut pay an addition 20%. I may need to leave my position to live with family due to cuts like this. Please… we have risen to the occasion, I ask you do the same. Do not stop the compensation.

Thank you for your time.

Maile French

B.Ed. and M. Ed.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lisa Chock <lchock71@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 5:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have been a teacher for 42 years. I am 66 years old , I smoke and have border line auto immune issues that I have been monitored for borderline lupus.
The D.O.E does not recognize old age like mine to be serious enough to consider us at highly at risk because Covid is even more dangerous for those who are in their 70's and Eighties..

I cannot understand that there are not enough safe guards in place to protect the teachers.in the physical school settings. The number of Covid 19 cases are spiking each day and more are dying than before, yet the B.O.E will not consider full online distant learning at least for the first quarter.
I also work in a disadvantage housing area that is considered a major hot spot of Covid cases Which must us at greater risks to contract the Covid Virus, and in my case, …die form it!

Has the B.O.E even taken any survey of how many teacher are currently retiring and not returning on August 4th or for the first quarter?
Has the B.O.E taken any data on how many substitute teachers you may have to cover teacher's absences?
Covid - 19 is already a "combat zone and red flag " for teachers to not want to return to work, and still it is proposed to denie differential compensations.

There was already a teacher and substitute shortage before the Covid pandemic and it seems unrealistic to think that incentives such as differentials are imperative.

I and truly stressed with anxiety about returning to school when the B.O.E makes proposals and decisions that consistently treats teacher with no professional regard and esteem.

I have no regards for B.OE members who are making these said decisions and have not stepped one foot into our classrooms to teach or do any hands on work with our students to experience the realities that you subject us to.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Carole Hasan <carolehasan9@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 5:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education members,

I urge continued funding for teacher shortage differentials. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Carole Hasan, I teach at Konawaena Middle on the Big Island in Kealakekua. I grew up on Oahu attending public schools from 1st grade-12th grade. I have 14 years of experience teaching special education and 12 years as a middle school counselor.

I currently receive a differential as a special education middle school teacher, The differential has helped me remain in my position, I would have applied for a counseling position were it not for the pay differential leaving my school with one more SpEd teaching vacancy.

I have seen the negative impact of unqualified substitute teachers on my students to a shortage of SpEd and Content Area teachers. Students feel less than without fully qualified teachers and lose interest in fully engaged learning. They engage in misbehavior to rid themselves of unqualified teachers who fail to help them learn needed grade level academic skills and a love of learning. A whole year of lost learning and setting them up for failure at the next grade level. It is no small thing.

Ending the differential pay would be a wrong decision that will hurt our most vulnerable keiki.

Plus according to BOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year went up by 29 percent over the 2019-20 school year, with the number of teachers who left SpEd positions went down by 57 percent. Almost two times as many teachers transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. The teacher differentials worked very successfully by making a major change in recruiting and keeping teachers in these shortage areas. It makes no sense to end a program that works so well in retaining teachers in critical hard to staff positions.

I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. Hawaii faces a teaching shortage of no less than 1,000.vacancies every year.

With the uncertainty and anxiety over Covid 19 hanging over the fall 20-21 school year we are seeing even more teachers retire or leave the profession. Slashing differential tearcher's pay will simply be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread.

If Hawaii’s teacher shortage crisis worsens, I am concerned we will see a collapse in our public education system. We cannot allow this to happen. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Mahalo,
Carole Hasan
7th grade Math SpEd Teacher
Konawaena Middle
Kealakekua, Big Island

Gmail

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

general business meeting item g

Joe Kassel <drjoeka@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 5:56 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I oppose the Board reducing teacher compensation at this or just about any time. I have watched the struggles to recruit and retain qualified teachers and believe this will sabotage those efforts. Our students deserve and need more resources, qualified teachers and educational opportunities in general. Since your presence on this board indicates a commitment to education, I hope that you will do everything that you can to preserve and expand resources and compensation. Society at large, needs to prioritize it's spending on social necessities and education should be very high on the list.
Mahalo and Aloha,
Dr. Joseph Kassel N.D.

Gmail

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

Differentials

Marie Romero <truenorth8@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 6:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I am a teacher on Lana'i which is a rural, hard to fill location. Let me tell you why having an extra 8k dollars a year matters.

Housing in Hawaii is expensive on every island. On Lana'i rent can be a little less than other islands. However, our options are extremely limited, and our rent is subjected to increases decided by the company that owns the island. This can create uncertainty. Next, our groceries are set at extremely high prices. For example, 2lbs. of cherries cost $18. Milk is $10 a gallon. Eggs are about $5 a dozen. These are just a few small examples.

Gasoline is about $4.40 a gallon last time I filled my tank.
Electricity is about $100 for 325 square feet.

Let's factor in the cost of travel to neighboring islands for basic shopping needs such as clothes, personal household goods, and personal services such as haircuts. Due to the limitations of shopping, service, and medical venues; living here forces you to travel for things such as health and beauty services. Medical appointments are required off island and all expenses incurred with that are not covered by insurance. The cost of a hotel is not covered. Food and rental car are not covered. For some Dr. visits such as a podiatrist, the travel expense is not covered. A round trip ferry ticket is $50 to Maui. A round trip airline ticket costs $140 to Oahu. Often if a flight is canceled, a hotel is required because there is only the one airline Ohana, so you don't have another airline to change to.

In summary, I'm asking you to reconsider the cancellation of hard to staff differentials for island rural areas. I believe this differential is the most essential out of the 3, and the most fair for all teachers living in these rural areas. With so many uncertainties surrounding Covid, teachers are already under stress returning to school. Fair and promised compensation should not be an additional uncertainty. The morale and livelihood of teachers directly effects the morale of students. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ruth Marie Romero

Gmail

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

Testomony

sachayenyen <sachayenyen@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 6:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To our leaders,

My name is Sacha Hemenway and I am a Kindergarten teacher on the Wai'anae Coast. I am writing to you to testify on Action Item G: Board Action on the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I firmly believe that this extra compensation needs to stay in place this school year for numerous reasons. The most important reason being that it has motivated many teachers in my school to fill one of the hardest to staff positions- SPED. This summer there have been numerous general education teachers at my school who have actually gotten SPED certified with the intention of teaching SPED either this 20-21 year, or in the recent years to come, myself included. These actions were prompted and motivated by the extra $10,000 bonus for SPED teachers. This was implemented with the hope that we would obtain more SPED teachers. Because the reason stated above I believe this to be working!! Therefore if you take that bonus away, why would SPED teachers remain in special education? Everyone knows that teaching is not easy, let alone teaching students with special needs. If this bonus gets taken away we will continue to see a staff shortage of SPED teachers, which brings us back to the same problem we are trying to fix.

I also was lucky enough to be a recipient of the hard-to-staff bonus this past year because I work on the Wai'anae Coast. This bonus has actually enabled me to save money to hopefully buy a place on O'ahu so that I can afford to live here. Teachers NEED this extra pay to survive and stay in Hawai'i to educate our Keiki! We don't want to teach in Vegas or Cali because it is cheaper. We want to teach our own children if possible, but we need this bonus to do that.

PLEASE STAND UP FOR US AND KEEP THESE BONUSES!! We will appreciate it more then you know.

Thank you for hearing me out.

Aloha,
Sacha Hemenway

Gmail

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

Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year

Shanaz Nassar <shanaz.nassar@hotmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 6:24 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Our public schools and our Keiki's education have suffered immensely due to lack of qualified teachers. Teachers need to be properly be compensated or they will simply leave! For many years teachers have been working voluntarily in order to better serve our Keiki. However, teachers also have bills to pay just like everyone else. For this reason, many teachers have elected to leave to profession. Not too many college students want to join this profession due to low wages and salaries.

I agree that COVID-19 has created a financial crisis; however, I strongly believe that the DOE can reduce their expenses, but not by cutting teachers who directly impact students learning. For example, perhaps reduce the amount of district resource teachers who do not directly impact student learning or do away with surveys that cost a lot of money...etc.

Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

Shahinaz Nassar
Wailuku Elementary School - Maui

Gmail

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

Teacher Differential Pay

leahjoseph2020@gmail.com <leahjoseph2020@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 7:04 PM
Reply-To: "leahjoseph2020@gmail.com" <leahjoseph2020@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a Sped Teacher I have never worked harder than I did during the 4th quarter of the past school year. I not only had to teach my resource students on a new platform but also try to keep up with my students in co-teach classes. While one teacher added me to their google classroom and provided me with web scheduled logins and passwords the other teacher did not so I was forced to email and call all my students in those classes to try and see what they were doing, how they were doing and if they needed additional help. This was extremely time consuming and frustrating for myself and those students.

Aside from my teaching duties I still had IEP's and progress reports to finish with constantly changing directives from school, District and State. I had to track down students and families, set up meetings, cajole Gen. Ed. teachers into attending meetings and teach parents/guardians how to access web based platforms to hold meetings. I had to track down counselors and speech/language providers for updates. I was required to create documents to upload to eCSSS for each student that was on my care-coordinating list. I was also required to attend content meetings with Gen. Ed. teachers that would openly admit that they only did office hours on demand. I also attended Sped meetings with seriously overworked colleagues trying to stay on top of the myriad of duties we had.

I have worked as both a Gen. Ed. teacher and a Sped teacher and with what was required of me during 4th quarter and the new blended learning that we are using in SY 20-21, if the differential was taken away I will start applying for Gen. Ed. positions.Teachers are payed poorly to begin with but for the amount of work that goes into being a Sped teacher the differential made up for some of the excessive workload.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

Aloha,
Leah Joseph

Gmail

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

Special Education teacher testimony

cecilythebest3 <cecilythebest3@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 7:21 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern in the Covid-19 Greater scheme of working with SPED children:

I have been teaching for 25 years, the last 10 in HIDOE.

I would like to point out that the CDC has made irresponsible and impossible demands for us to be in the classroom with the kids. I very much want to be in the classroom with my students. And not have to sit 3' or 6' apart d
from any of them. Have you ever worked with a child who struggles? They really don't want a lot of attention brought towards them, especially if a teacher has to make ridiculous efforts to help them yet not be next concurrently to them. Please be advised, that if you want us to be GOOD SPED teachers, we must be able to sit with OUR STUDENTS to help them.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Cecily Best
MAE SPED, BAE MUSIC ED/SPED
SPED Teacher at Keoneula ES,
LEEWARD DISTRICT

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony for 7/23 Meeting

Mary S. <lokelani86@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:14 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am providing testimony on the action items related to the Department of Education's Plan for School Re-Opening.

My name is Mary Shire and I am a National Board Certified Language Arts teacher at Aiea Intermediate School where I have taught for 12 years . I am extremely concerned about the reopening of schools right now while COVID-19 cases in the state are continuing to rise. **I believe that it is irresponsible for Hawaii schools to open up on August 4 and public schools should go full distance learning for at least the first quarter of the school year.** This will provide schools further time to prepare for a potential hybrid model as well as give time to monitor the ever-changing Covid-19 situation.

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 at 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. Also, last week a child in a summer program in our school community tested positive for COVID-19, which hits just a bit close to home. It is clear that children will probably pass around or even come down with COVID-19 themselves when they return to school

A recent study in South Korea has been publicized that says students 10 and up are just as likely to spread coronavirus as an adult. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/18/health/coronavirus-children-schools.html?fbclid=IwAR0kfl-Fc_wSmtixnqogFlePNrxQeraX60z6B7T2MisJNu3SAn-IruXBolU This is extremely alarming to me. As a middle school teacher I see 50+ students a day, and they may interact with another 50 students over the day as well, 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. My students, myself and my family should not have to possibly sacrifice our health when distance learning can be a fully safe option.

I believe that my school is doing as good of a job as possible in this situation. Our classes have been cut down to 50% under a hybrid model, parents are offered a full distance option for students if they desire and our school is working to provide supplies for teachers. Still though, there is so much to be done and so little time to do it all. Despite our efforts I still do not feel totally safe going back to work and I know that I am not the only teacher or parent that feels that way.

Please listen to the people of Hawaii who want to keep our teachers, students and families safe. Please delay the start of in-person classes and allow schools to provide full distance learning. No person in Hawaii should be asked to sacrifice their life when safer alternatives are available.
Thank you for your time.
Mary Shire

Gmail

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

Funding for Teacher Shortage Differentials

Jenna Oskey <joskey2@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a special education teacher (with my master's degree in special education and English as a Second Language), and I have been working in the HIDOE for one year. Last year, I had to make a big decision: should I stay in my current position in public school in Illinois or move to Hawaii to a district that I knew was in desperate need of Special Education teachers. My last position had a grueling interview process that included thousands of applicants, a large pay increase with the completion of a master's degree, and a plethora of opportunities to earn extra stipends and pay within the district. In addition, with a new contract beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, teachers would receive a large increase in salary. When researching teaching in Hawaii, I quickly learned that it was rated as one of the least favorable states to teach in, mainly because of its teacher's yearly salary vs. the cost of living.

I decided to move to Hawaii and to continue my teaching career there. While I knew that the cost of living would increase and my pay increase for having a master's degree would increase (even though I would have to continue to pay for those student loans), one of the things that made these transition possible was the possibility of the pay differentials for areas that there are teacher shortages.

While I've loved my entire teaching experience here, that pay differential has made it possible for me to continue teaching here and for me to purchase items for my classroom to help foster my students' growth in many different ways. This differential has made it possible for me to continue teaching in my amazing school in this wonderful district. I am currently the Special Education Grade Level Chair for my school, and I can tell you how big of a positive impact this has made on all of the teachers with whom I work.

Now, more than ever, we need teachers to fill these positions. As the new school year starts, there is a lot of uncertainty among teachers. Many teachers are retiring or leaving the field due to the rising fear of the impact that Covid-19 could possibly have on our schools, students, families, and staff members. We have been working endless hours throughout the summer to ensure that our students' needs will be met, their families will feel supporting, and everyone will feel safe within our school. Should the pay differentials be taken away, I strongly believe that many teachers in these areas will feel like they are not needed, replaceable, and disrespected. We will see even more of these teachers leaving these already hard-to-staff positions, and these positions will not easily be filled again.

From my own experiences and from the testimonies of my peers, I firmly believe that these pay differentials should take priority in the budget and should continue for these teacher shortages (and should begin for all teachers in the district).

Thank you for your time and attention. It is appreciated very much.

Sincerely,
Jenna Oskey

Gmail

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

Testimony - Action Item G

Logan Okita <lokitahsta@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 8:44 PM

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Logan Okita and I teach first grade at Nimitz Elementary School. I am writing to you today to urge you to vote against the action item on your agenda regarding the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Although I do not qualify for any of these shortage differentials, I believe that they are important for not only my colleagues, but the students they serve. Every student deserves a qualified teacher. Hawaii was in a teacher shortage crisis that you as a Board acknowledged prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers are leaving and retiring due to the unknowns of the pandemic and discontinuing these differentials will only encourage those who are barely holding on to leave as well.

Although Dr. Kishimoto wrote that this is for the 2020-2021 school year and she intends on requesting the funds needed to continue the compensation for the 2021-2023 budget, this is not a commitment to reinstate the shortage differentials. In December 2019 she told the Board of Education that she would find the funds to pay for these differentials if the Legislature did not fund it. Now we are being told that the funds are not there and it will be a temporary discontinuation. Hawaii's educators have no reason to trust that it is just for a year.

On June 18th you adopted the 2020 School Reopening Resolution that suggested that we use three simple principles during this time: Giving Hope, Acting with Care, and Working toward Togetherness. Although Giving Hope notes that it is particularly to students, I believe that the only way we can successfully open our schools is to focus on collaborative efforts and these three principles. They are referred to in the MOU and in faculty meetings. They need to be referred to when you discuss this action item. Are you giving educators hope by stopping the additional compensation? In June we received the Notification of Personnel Action (Form 5) for the 2020-2021 school year. The educators who qualified for the additional compensation were told then that they would be receiving it and have planned around it. Educators who were contemplating leaving because of the unknowns will now leave. How does it give hope to our students if they will be returning to classrooms without a qualified teacher?

I urge you to not allow Dr. Kishimoto to stop the additional compensation during a time when we should be giving hope, acting with kindness, and working toward togetherness.

Sincerely,
Logan Okita, MEd, NBCT
Nimitz Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Meghan Flynn <meghan.flynn@campbell.k12.hi.us> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Meghan Flynn and I'm a special education teacher at Campbell High School. I am writing in regards to the July 23 BOE General Board Meeting agenda item G Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I write to you to oppose the motion to temporarily discontinue these pay differentials in the interest of our keiki, teachers, and the community at large.

Now is the time to fairly compensate our teachers for risking their lives to go back to the classroom. Taking away the hard-earned paychecks of teachers will ultimately hurt the community as a whole.

Personally, I will not be able to make ends meet without the special education bonus. I used my time over the summer to become certified in special education in order to be a better teacher for our keiki. Do not take away teachers' hard-earned money. Do not hurt the chances of keiki having qualified and hard-working teachers. Do not slow the flow of money into our very own communities. Make the right decision for the sake of our communities ESPECIALLY during a global pandemic.

Do the right thing. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,
Meghan

Ms. Meghan Flynn
James Campbell High School
English/ Social Studies Resource
meghan.flynn@campbell.k12.hi.us
(808)305-3833

Teacher Shortage Differentials

sonani44 <sonani44@yahoo.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Please, I humbly ask that you do not defer on the shortage differentials for teachers. I am a teacher at a hard-to-staff school on the leeward coast. I have voluntarily committed my teaching career to serve the leeward communities, and make great efforts to recruit other teachers to make the same commitment because the kids here deserve the best teachers, too. We have been working even harder than before to ensure that we continue to support the needs of our students in the hard-to-staff schools. Taking away these differentials is essentially taking away from our students. This money does not go into our pockets. It goes to different ways that we can make a difference in our students' lives - from buying additional school supplies and tools to support their learning, to food and snacks for our kids, whom we know will go without anything to eat once they step off of our school campuses. This money does not go into our pockets. It goes to the gas tanks of our vehicles that take us to and from our schools to be there for our kids, our students, so that they know SOMEBODY is always going to be there for them. That SOMEBODY cares about them, their education, and overall health and well-being, and is going to show up for them every day. This money does not go into our pockets. It goes to whatever countless ways we can show our students and their families that we care about them. This money goes to our kids and the under-served communities in which we are trying to influence positive change in the lives of the families we have committed ourselves to making that change through our school communities. Maybe nobody else is willing to work at our hard-to-staff schools, but WE ARE!!! And yet, you are at a place where you have to consider taking even more away from the schools and communities that need the most support.

If these differentials are defered, you are telling our kids that they do not really matter as much, and you do not care about the sacrifices educators make to work in the hard-to-staff schools. You are undermining our efforts to build up the schools and the communities we work in. You are making it that more difficult for teachers to show up for our kids who need us to be there for them and to show them that we will not give up on them. No, not everybody is going to quit and give up on them. You, however, will be suffocating us with this deferment and killing our morale in the very hearts and environments that thrive on hope - our hope that not everyone is going to give up on our kids and their communities that so many others choose to simply ignore and easily abandon. This state leaves education with pennies to shape the future. How is it that you suppose and justify that we continue to do more with even less than that? We are here!!! We are here in these schools that are hard to staff, so please help keep us here where we want to be - for our kids.

Please, I humbly ask that you find other ways to make whatever budget work without having to defer on these differentials.

Regards,

A proud and dedicated hard-to-staff school educator

Gmail

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

Testimony

Katherine (Katie) Jagger <katie.m.jagger@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 9:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Katie Jagger and I work at Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School as a special education teacher. My son is a rising fifth grader at the school as well.

I urge to to keep the pay differential for the hard-to-fill positions stated above. As a special educator, to see the DOE data that the pay differential led to a 29% increase in teachers filling SPED positions tells me that the plan worked. To take the differential away at this time could lead to even greater teacher shortages again. We can not afford to lose ANY teachers during this time, let alone special educators.

I never like to complain without proposing a solution. In my four years teaching in Hawaii, I have come across many licensed teachers filling 12-month non-classroom positions, such as district resource teachers and Student Services Coordinators. Do these really need to be 12-month lines? Maybe you could audit these positions to look at ways to combine two positions into one, or eliminate some altogether? The teachers who once filled these lines could then go back into the classroom and help the teacher shortage. I suspect there's a lot of money going into filling these positions that could be used in other ways.

Respectfully,

Katie Jagger

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Cutting my pay

munekatajud@gmail.com <munekatajud@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 10:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please please don’t cut my pay it is the reason I have decided to continue to teach because living in Hawaii, a single grandma the cost of living is just to high to survive on my special education teacher salary.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

VERY CONCERNED-PLEASE READ

J808 Town <j808town12@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 10:17 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a parent and teacher and want to share my concern. As our state's BOE, you have a responsibility to protect our children and their families. How can we even think about having face to face school when our current situation is getting worse. I'm sure you are aware that the number of positive cases is increasing, more deaths, and many more hospitalizations. This is the most ridiculous thing I heard at a recent meeting with Dr. Anderson. Dr. Anderson said, "I'd be willing to bet we're gonna get cases very quickly showing up among kids in classrooms." What?! And knowing this you are sending the students and teachers back to a close confined classroom with very bad ventilation. How does this make any sense? It's like telling us to enter a room that is filled with poison. He also added that we are the first schools to open up and that we will learn as we go and make adjustments. You folks are gambling with lives and not poker chips. How would you feel if a child or teacher got really sick and died from COVID as the state is still trying to figure things out? Or if a kupuna dies because the child brought home COVID from school. At my school, grandparents pick up their grandkids all the time. I can't believe what I am hearing!! We need to do distance learning for the 1st semester and then reevaluate the situation. Maybe by then, we might have a vaccine and then everyone can return back to school safely. This might also give Dr. Anderson time to "figure" things out and not gamble with people's lives. Is it really worth it to risk lives just to have in-person teaching for a few months? Answer this honestly as you think about this. If your son or daughter was a teacher, would you feel safe sending them into a classroom knowing what you know? I bet not because you know it's a gamble. More children are getting the virus and will have lasting medical effects. Many teachers have already died being in close classrooms on the mainland and other countries. I'm glad that Dr. Anderson was honest when he made that statement instead of trying to sugar coat it. So more so we need to be proactive rather than reactive. Do distance learning for the first semester instead of waiting for COVID to get out of control in the schools and then shutdown. This is going to cause another sudden shutdown and parents and teachers will have to scramble again. But if we start with Distance Learning then students will have already been trained and have the technology all set and will be ready for a successful online learning experience. PLEASE LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE THAT REALLY KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF SCHOOLS OPEN TOO SOON. The bubble concept will not work. How can a classroom be a bubble when each student has a family. That means their "ohana bubble" will mix with their "classroom bubble" and their "bus bubble" will also mix with all the other bubbles. Not to mention their "sports bubble." It's not a bubble, it's what teachers call a WEB. The only way it will work is if you literally keep us in a bubble 24/7 and have NO interaction with anyone else. See how ridiculous this bubble concept is. Life doesn't work like that. Please do something now. The board has a responsibility to the parents, teachers, kupunas, and children. We have reached out to our congressional leaders, senator, and anyone else who will step in to make the right choice.

Thank you,
Jane K

Gmail

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

Testimony

Stacy Richards <stacyrichards1111@gmail.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:39 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I have benefited this calendar year because of the differentials...which really helped as I housed multiple additional people during the quarantine due to housing.

Due to the high cost of living in Hawaii and Hana and other costs, and being the sole provider for myself in Hana, I have moved this summer to a housing situation that will allow me to pay less rent money, but will require me to have "work hours" on the land. This land work (for my shelter) will be in addition to a full work week as an elementary school teacher in Hana. There are not many additional jobs in Hana to make extra money (especially now) with Covid-19. And there are no housing stipends given.

Losing additional money in my paycheck will greatly influence my monthly budget, and will continue to influence my decision to leave the teaching profession.

Mahalo,
Stacy Richards
Hana High & Elementary School
Elementary Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony to BOE

Dee Wong <deardee@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii BOE,

My name is Dee Wong, a special education preschool teacher at Maemae Elementary School. I am writing because I am deeply concerned about discontinuing funding for teacher shortage differentials. I am writing to testify on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I have been a special education teacher since 2006. During the past 14 years of teaching, I had experienced lots of great moments of students' progress and achievement, but I had also gone through a lot of unnecessary stress due to the lack of support of our state education system. Kids who are receiving special education are already at a disadvantage and vulnerable group, and their families usually are struggling. As special education teachers, we do not only help our sped kids, we are also helping their families to feel stronger to face the challenges, to feel that there is still hope for their children's future because they are not alone with the entire sped staff team's help.

However it was never easy. Sped teachers have crazy and never- ending amounts of paperwork. I feel it is so unfair for my students that I use my instructional time to do my obligated paperwork; therefore, I always end up working late after school and it was quite normal that I had to bring the paperwork home to finish. Instruction design also takes up a great amount of time. Every year I have at least 10 cases in my roster (usually 12-14). For each student, I have to design different data collection systems and instructional materials to help them achieve their educational goals. However, I am always telling myself, if it is my choice to help Sped kids, then I must do my very best. These lessons planning, again, usually takes up at least half a day of my Sundays. My kids are always complaining that I spend too much time on my students, and I just told them it's mommy job to prepare a lot to help those who cannot talk and learn like their peers.

Already teaching in Hawaii is not a very rewarding career. Salary wise, only based on 7 working hours a day, my average hourly wage would be $40 before the differentials after 14 years of teaching. When I added the actual working hours, I doubt my hourly wage would be even close to $30. My flight attendant friend gets paid about $ 50 per hour with her 7 years of experience.

We don't get paid more compared to a lot of other careers, but we have to battle with all kinds of scenarios and challenges as special education teachers. We have to potty train students, change diapers, wipe the spits from students with anger management issues, deal with physical attacks from students, and sometimes get students' pee or doo-doo on us. When sped teacher met together at training and started to share our class experiences, almost everybody had some sort of "battle scars" --usually students' bite marks or pinch bruises . Currently I have 2 permanent bite marks on my breast and tummy, and my right hand pinkie was bent badly from my 4-year-old student with some emotional disorders that I can still feel the pain for the past 10 months. Last year I was seriously thinking about leaving the special education teacher position and I told myself that I need to apply for other DOE positions for better health and mental reasons, I decided to stay due to the $10,000 incentive. That $10,000 is not only rewarding me for the monetary value, it made me feel really proud of what I did because **finally we were being recognized for our hard and extraordinary work**. If the proposal of discontinuing differential funding were to pass, I may not return to DOE special education position next year.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about a decision to be made with thinking about what special education teachers have to go through every day in the classroom and after work hours. Please consider continuing funding the differentials, so more qualified sped teachers will stay to help our keiki and families. Your wise decision will not only help Hawaii special education teachers, but it will also benefit our speical education keiki, their families, and their/our future.

Mahalo

Best regards,

Dee Wong

Maemae Elementary Preschool Teacher
319 Wyllie Street
Honolulu HI 96817

Gmail

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

Delay the opening of schools

L. Low <llow08@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:09 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE,

We do not need to have teachers or students die to realize it is a mistake to rush and open school during the pandemic that is spreading rapidly. As a teacher of 21 years, I am considering early retirement to save my life as I have a compromised immune system.
Science teachers like me are not easily found. Safe lives and jobs. I don't want to retire this semester.

Lynette Low
Kaimuki High School
Teacher

Sent from my iPad

TESTIMONY: Action Item G - DIFFERENTIALS

Cheryl Orallo <cheryl.orallo@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:05 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>
Cc: Cheryl Orallo <cheryl.orallo@hawks.k12.hi.us>

To whom it may concern:

My name is Cheryl Orallo and I am a Spanish teacher at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School, a hard-to-staff school. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. These differentials are vital to drawing and retaining teachers in these areas and data shows that it's proven to work.

I currently receive the $8,000 a year differential. That translates to about an extra $222.00 each paycheck or about $444.00 net pay per month. I chose to stay at a hard-to-staff school because of this even if it costs a bit more in gas per month. The little bit left over from this differential means my family can buy food to eat. Now it is even harder as I have become the breadwinner in the household due to COVID-19. As it is, I already need to take a second or third job to make ends meet on top of teaching full-time.

I myself am a product of Hawai`is public school system on the Hāmākua Coast of the Big Island. Honoka`a High and Intermediate is a hard-to-staff school as well and I have family and friends' children who attend that school. I went to rural school in Laupahoehoe and I remember how many times teachers left. No one really stayed and that affected me. I had a new GT English and Social Studies teacher leave two months into the school year. My beloved math teacher left, and countless others. All the good teachers left and I guess a far rural school just wasn't for them.

I tell that story because now at the other end as a teacher at a hard-to-staff rural school, I have been asked to "please stay", or told "I hope you stay" or "these kids say that no one really stays, all the good teachers leave eventually." I remember how that was me saying that as a student in a rural area with limited resources.
Paying those differentials helps to draw and retain teachers in these areas and alleviate the extra cost of gas it takes to drive to a much farther location. Most importantly it gives the students quality teachers who STAY.

Special Education teachers do a lot of extra work and the differential compensates them fairly for the extra workload they carry like data collection, reports, IEP's etc.

Hawaiian Immersion teachers do a lot of extra work to create and translate curriculum for and into Hawaiian. Please keep the differential and compensate them fairly as well.

I understand we are struggling but why do teachers like me have to be put on an emotional roller coaster every time a pay cut is proposed? Why should pay cuts for teachers even be thought of in the first place? Why not look at other areas to balance the budget? Instead of focusing on preparing for

the school year and focusing on teaching, I'm spending my time looking to survive. I'm looking for other jobs to make ends meet and without the differential it would be worse. I'm looking at where I can go to a food distribution to get food for my family.

When you look at cutting the budget, please look elsewhere and leave our salary and differentials alone. It's already hard for the students and teachers. With cuts like these continually being proposed you are hurting our current education system and also scaring away any new potential future teachers. Why would high school students even consider a career in teaching if it's a continual fight for pay and survival? I question if I chose the right profession and wonder if I should return to my first career and leave teaching altogether. I have never ever in any other job or career experience such financial instability and under appreciation for the work that I do. Teachers in these areas do more work and I say that as one who has worked at multiple other schools. Pay us the differentials for our extra work and what we are worth.

Thank you for your time.

Cheryl Orallo
Spanish Teacher
Nānākuli High and Intermediate School

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Brittany Johnson <johnsonbe78@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing to testify in Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**. I am outraged that the state is going back on their promise. I am a third grade inclusion sped teacher at Wheeler Elementary.

We were informed that all IEP will need to be done during the first month of school. Which means we will be working on overtime and the thought of not being compensated frustrates me. As a SPED teacher I have the responsibility of planning, prepping, Grading, and teaching my students then after all that's done I need to rewrite several IEPs that are still current. We have all the same responsibilities as general education teacher plus more. We aren't given time within our day, we have to use our own personal time.

We were given this differential pay to compensate. By taking it away you are devaluating the work we do and asking us to get buy with less.

I understand our economy is taking a hit right now, but if it is so important students return to school then you need to fund and keep the promises that you made.

I speak for myself, I love teaching and I love the students. I don't like how every time there is a problem my paycheck gets smaller and then get asked to do more.

As a society we are abusing our teachers. You ask and expect them to give and do more but then pay them less and less or taking away funding. Teachers have huge hearts and will always take care of their students and purchase supplies they need. Maybe we have done this to ourselves. When fundings get cut we make up the rest. Maybe we should stop. Maybe we should only do what the budget allows us to do which is minimal. I wonder what our society will look like is 10 years if all teachers only did the minimal. Would we have more outraged parents, would the economy be the same or worse? There is a lot of what ifs.

We are Americans and we all pride ourselves on being so. But if we look at our education system compares to some we are not the best. We are somewhere in the middle. Why? The answer is simple we do not value teacher or education because it is the area we pull funding from first.

Not all teachers are married and have another income to live here in Hawaii. If we continue to pull funding then we are going to lose more and more teachers. What is the plan then??

Sincerely,

Brittany Vimahi

Gmail

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

Please don’t defer sped teacher compensation and payments!!

S. Y. Im <yonim@ymail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi!

As a special educator on this island of Oahu for 10 years now it is even more important than ever that we compensate educators fairly and in a timely manner. I cannot stress the importance of this to ensure that we retain good teachers as this profession becomes ever more stressful and demanding as the years progress. As seasoned teachers you would think it would get easier?! No, it surely does not. Only if you compensate in a fair and just manner, can you even think about retaining the good ones and enticing the green ones to stick around and educate the children and attempt to enjoy their job. Not only that, in order to even fathom affording to live in paradise. The cost of living the the compensate for not go hand in hand. We all know that. Let’s make it right and make it fair.

So PLEASE DO NOT defer payments or compensation to special educators.

Thank you,

Yon Im

Gmail

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

Differential Cuts

hawaiibrothers <hawaiibrothers@aol.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hazzard Pay

We all know teachers have been assaulted verbally/physically on campus, shot on campus, property vandalized on campus and now being told to go back to school during a pandemic as we are essential for the economy to open again. Teachers are possibly risking our lives every day and the D.O.E. wants to cut the negotiated pay differentials established. I say if we are essential and facing possible death we deserve Hazzard Pay not Pay Cuts.

My Thoughts

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Gregory Miller <gregory.miller@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Morning,

I am writing to you in regards to Item Action G - **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Removing these recently implemented increases in pay for hard to fill positions/locations is a short-sighted and harmful decision. The long term ramifications will be felt and will have a long-term negative impact on our students here in Hawaii. These increases were implemented with good faith for a good reason and by all accounts had very positive effects.

Before going through with this decision, please ask yourselves, is this worth it? Is it worth it to so quickly remove these pay increases? Will it be worth it when next year many of these teachers transfer out of these hard to fill positions and decide to leave teaching altogether due to endless frustration? The answer is that it is not worth it.

I will be starting my 9th year of teaching Special Education next week. In 2016 I left Hawaii for a year for the mainland, seeking better pay and a lower cost of living. I ended up returning after a year because I did not enjoy the area I had moved to, and missed Hawaii. Since returning I have still considered moving again, but have taken my time because I want to make a better and more calculated decision this time.

This past January, when I received my first pay differential, for the first time in my teaching career in Hawaii, I thought to myself that this is finally worth it. I could finally pay my bills and living expenses and even save some money without having to work a second job, which I had been doing for years. A co-worker and I were chatting about the pay increase and she remarked to me that this is the first time in her 20+ years of teaching that she finally felt good about what she was being paid. Needless to say, morale was high. SPED teachers were finally not talking about transferring to non-SPED positions and people like me stopped thinking about moving to the mainland seeking the higher pay and lower cost of living.

Fast forward to July 2020 and it feels like the rug has been pulled from under our feet. If we are being honest, it feels very disingenuous to wait until the transfer period is over and teachers have decided to not leave their positions. We are all locked in to a new contract and school year and suddenly this comes up. It is hard to not question the timing. Speaking for myself and co-workers who I have talked with - We are mad. We are upset. We are not happy. There will be effects that will be felt next year and beyond. Teachers will leave. To use myself as an example: I have a Master's Degree and teach Special Education. I will get calls wherever I apply because SPED teachers are in short supply. I will consider leaving again and not think twice about it. I know I will not be the only one. We will be back to where we started, with hard to fill positions being filled by unqualified people, and we will be under-serving our students AGAIN.

Please think twice before moving forward with this decision. Thank you for taking time to read my letter and taking time to re-think this brash decision.

Sincerely,

Gregg Miller
Special Education Teacher
Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School

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Gmail

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

SPED Teacher Differential Testimony

Amanda Moore <mooreaj1990@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing to share my thoughts on the proposal that special education differentials be discontinued.

I am a general education teacher who transfered into a special education position for the 2020-2020 school year with the promise of increased pay. This past year, I was partnered with an emergency hire special education teacher. She was unable to provide adequate special education services and I had to take over the student's cases as a result. This was extremely taxing having to teach a combo class of 27 4th and 5th graders as well as take over the cases of the four special education students. I am now taking over the special education position that was previously filled with the emergency hire and teaching a general education classroom. This is above and beyond my work requirements but is what must be done for the students. I am not in education to make lots of money but I do need to be compensated fairly and appropriately.

With the differential my husband and I are able to afford to live in Hawaii. Losing the differential will result in the Department of Education to lose two teachers due to the need to move. I am a highly qualified teacher with six years in the classroom and two degrees in special education (Bachelors and Masters). I also began the inclusion program at my school. This will be a huge loss for the school and for the future students of my school.

With the COVID pandemic special education teachers have also been given more work to do. Special education teachers must hold IEP meetings for all of their students to discuss makeup services. They are also asked to use three hours per student to assess for learning loss. For me, this 27 hours of extra work I must do for no additional compensation.

In conclusion, removing the differential for special education teachers will directly affect the young people of Hawaii. More students will fall through the cracks by being taught by non qualified teachers and substitutes. This will drive more teachers out of Hawaii and the children will suffer.

Mahalo,
Amanda Suchy

Gmail

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

Teacher Pay

Kyle Herendeen <kherendeen@kkhs.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:11 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a HIDOE teacher for 15 years I urge the DOE to continue to pay teachers and also keep the differential for hard-to-fill positions. Cost of living is going up at a rate that out pay is not. Cutting any teacher pay would cause me to have to leave the island and go to a place where my family can live. We would move to the mainland where teacher pay is better and cost of living is lower. Please consider your goal of teacher retention before you decide to cut pay. Cutting pay would guarantee the loss of a great number of educators, especially hard-to-fill positions.

Mahalo,

--
Kyle Herendeen

Special Education Teacher
King Kekaulike HS

Gmail

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

Continue Differentials

lynn zinsius <lynnzinsius@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board Members,
Thank you for all of your efforts during this pandemic. Please continue differentials for our teachers in special education , Hawaiian immersion and hard -to -staff schools. We are supporting our most vulnerable students As a special education teacher , I can state that during normal circumstances the responsibilities are great. Now , during a time when expectations are even greater and the amount of time and effort to support these vulnerable students has exponentially increased. Education funding should not be discontinued temporarily or otherwise. These types of decisions could lead to the exit of even more qualified and passionate teachers.
Sincerely,
Lynn Zinsius
Special Education Teacher
Kaohao School

Testimony

Lizzy Laliberty <puchanus@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**

Aloha BOE Members,

Cutting teachers' pay may seem like a good idea to save money, but it ends up hurting more than just teachers and their families. A reduction in teacher pay will inflict more damage to the local economy while of course most importantly, negatively affecting students' learning and outcomes.

A strong reason to not cut teacher salaries is the differentials were overwhelmingly approved by the BOE/DOE, and they were beginning to work. The pay differentials helped retain and recruit teachers into shortage areas. DOE data collection shows that teachers entering into Sped positions increased by 29%, while 18% more teachers opted to teach at hard to staff schools. This initiative was meeting its goal. More students in geographically remote schools and more Special needs students would have a qualified teacher for 2020-2021. Eliminating the differential will probably undo this positive trend.

Ultimately, the plan to cut pay is short-sighted and foolish. When combined with the risks of catching COVID at work, older teachers may retire early and thus leave an even worse equity gap in the quality of instruction for the most vulnerable students. Who will suffer the most from this decision? Predictably, the students who will be taught by unqualified teachers who may or may not stay for the whole year, who aren't experienced in effective teaching methods, who aren't going to have the time, energy and experience to develop relationships with students. Experts in the field of education maintain it's the caring, personal relationship between teachers and students that dramatically increases learning. Unfortunately, a quick appraisal of the coming school year's challenges causes even the most veteran teachers to struggle with ways to reach and teach students. Long-term subs and newbie teachers will face the most difficult challenge of how to make 1-2 in person meetings per week into meaningful learning experiences.

Furthermore, to people calling for teacher pay cuts because so many other workers are suffering I reply, "Absolutely not!" This is ***exactly why*** we are dues-paying members of HSTA! Unemployed workers in the private sector may accuse teachers of being greedy, claiming private sector jobs are

taking a hit, so we should sacrifice too. This makes no sense. It's like your friend saying that because their house burned down, you should burn your down too, just to be fair. How would it help your friend if neither of you had a house to live in? A pay cut for teachers won't bring back jobs in the tourism industry or any other sector.

The solution to fixing our ailing economy isn't to make more people suffer, but for our state government to increase spending. One important way to do that is to keep government workers onboard at full salary, which ensures that they can keep paying for housing, food, transportation and other necessities. The Hawai'i Budget and Policy Center (HBPC) reports "The International Monetary Fund has found that every dollar of reduced government spending results in as much as $1.50 in lost economic activity. That means that a $1 billion cut in public sector pay and social services spending would punch a $1.5 billion hole in our economy." It's important to remember the state has options for bringing in revenues. They simply need the political will and backbone to do it, because available streams of revenue can and should come from those making the most money. For example, wealthy real estate investors and those using Hawai'i as an offshore tax haven. The HBPC estimates 2.3 billion in revenues can be tapped from these and other sources. Rather than focusing attention in cutting funding from teachers and schools, elected leaders should look at RAISING revenues to meet spending needs. The money is there. We are requesting leaders muster the political will to make these tough decisions.

At the end of the day, teachers ARE essential workers. It was said by many that school closures this past spring raised awareness among parents as to the importance of teachers, schools and the associated services they provide. Society at large supposedly has a newfound appreciation of how difficult teaching can be. In particular, it takes a unique skill set as well as years of experience to be an effective special education teacher, and Hawai'ian immersion teacher. The BOE, DOE and Legislators need to keep their word by keeping these teachers' pay differentials intact. Going back on the promise to fund these differentials will hurt teachers, students and our local economy. I encourage everyone to read the HBPC progressive revenue options for 8 different ways to avoid these damaging spending cuts.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Laliberte
Special Education Teacher, Hilo

Progressive-Revenue-Options-version-2-May-2020.pdf
214K

HAWAIʻI: PROGRESSIVE REVENUE OPTIONS version 2

HAWAIʻI BUDGET & POLICY CENTER
Better information. Better policy. Better Hawaiʻi.

HAWAIʻI RESPONDS

AVOID DAMAGING SPENDING CUTS

AS HAWAIʻI'S LAWMAKERS reopen the legislative session to tackle an estimated $1 billion gap in the state budget, it's important for them to keep in mind that deep government spending cuts would have a devastating effect on our already injured economy, as well as hobble social services that are becoming more and more essential during this crisis.

Spending is the fuel that keeps our economic engines running. As the private sector engine of our economy sputters, the government needs to throttle up its spending in order to keep the economy going. Past recessions have shown us that state spending cuts exacerbate the economic damage. At this crucial time, cutting government spending would be akin to taking our foot off the pedal and letting the second engine of the economy sputter as well.

IN FACT, the International Monetary Fund has found that every dollar of reduced government spending results in as much as $1.50 in lost economic activity. That means that a $1 billion cut in public sector pay and social services spending would punch a $1.5 billion hole in our economy.

Instead, we should look for every opportunity to keep the economy running. One important way to do that is to keep government workers onboard at full salary, which ensures that they can keep paying for housing, food, transportation and other necessities. A big reduction in state worker pay would hurt not just the workers and their families, but also local Hawaiʻi businesses, and inflict more damage to the economy.

Another wise move would be for the government to direct money into the wallets of those who are struggling and who will immediately spend it on necessities. Doing so helps not only the recipients, but also Hawaiʻi's farmers, grocers, restaurants, retailers, property owners, and other local businesses.

Our leaders should also remember that social service cutbacks during the Great Recession continue to be felt and seen on our streets. Social service providers still haven't been able to undo all the damage inflicted on nonprofits and the state's mental health system by funding slashed a decade ago.

Especially now, with interest rates being so low and a huge new Federal Reserve lending facility opened for the states, the best course for Hawaiʻi would be for the state to borrow money and find progressive revenue sources, rather than cut spending.

The Federal Reserve's lending facility and seven progressive recession-appropriate revenue options that could bring **hundreds of millions to nearly 3 billion dollars** into state coffers are outlined below. Good public policy can help us minimize damaging spending cuts as well as keep the economy afloat now and ready for a better future.

TAP THE FEDERAL RESERVE MUNICIPAL LIQUIDITY FACILITY

The state constitution authorizes general fund expenditures in excess of revenues "when the governor publicly declares the public health, safety or welfare is threatened," and may issue bonds "to meet emergencies caused by disaster or

act of God."[i] This provision exists for precisely the kind of emergency we're currently facing, and the state should make use of it.

In fact, borrowing money may be the best option for the state right now. Through its new Municipal Liquidity Facility, the Federal Reserve is offering loans to states to help manage cash flow stresses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.[ii] The maximum loan amount is 20 percent of general fund revenue from own sources, or about **$2.13 billion** for Hawai'i.[iii]

Hawai'i would be able to borrow at the lowest possible interest rates, since the state announced last December that it had achieved its best credit rating ever.[iv] This opportunity is available through December 30, 2020, and the loans must mature 36 months or sooner from the date of issuance.

CAPTURE THE TOP ONE PERCENT'S INCOME TAX BREAK

Hawai'i's top one percent earn more than $557,600 per year, with an average income of about $1.3 million. The federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is giving each of them an average federal income tax break of $35,460 in 2020.[v] This would be a good time for them to share those federal tax savings—estimated to total **$253 million**—with the state.

If Hawai'i's top one percent were to pay 10 percent more in personal income taxes than what they currently pay, each would owe an average of $8,200 more, yielding a total about **$43 million** in revenue for the state.

CAPTURE THE CORPORATE PROFITS TAX BREAK

The federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act cut the federal corporate income tax rate by 14 percentage points, from 35 percent to 21 percent, so companies are getting a large tax break at the federal level.[vi]

Hawai'i's current top corporate tax rate of 6.4 percent is below the median of the states. We are ranked 34th among states in per capita corporate tax collections, at $103 per person, while the 1st state, New Hampshire, collects $582 per person.[vii]

Corporate taxes differ from individual income taxes in important ways. First, the corporate tax is applied only to profits, so companies facing losses do not pay corporate income tax.

Second, having different income tax brackets makes sense for individual income taxes because those with lower incomes are less able to afford a high tax bill. However, there is no similar "ability to pay" concept for corporations. Hawai'i has three corporate tax brackets, while more than 30 other states have a single corporate tax rate.[viii]

If Hawai'i were to have a single tax rate on corporate profits of 9 percent, it would raise an additional **$103 million** in revenue.[ix]

CLOSE THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX LOOPHOLE

Hawai'i is one of only nine states that allows capital gains—profits from the sale of stocks, bonds, investment real estate, art, and antiques—to be taxed at a *lower* rate than ordinary income.[x] That's a tax break that goes almost entirely to high-income taxpayers, including non-residents who profit from investing in real estate in Hawai'i.

Long-term capital gains constitute 10 percent of total taxable income in the state, or nearly $3.5 billion in 2017.[xi] If those capital gains were taxed at regular individual income tax rates, it would yield about **$100 million** in new revenue.

TAX REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) own approximately $17 billion worth of Hawai'i real estate and earn about $1 billion in profits every year.[xii] Hawai'i REITs should be taxed, as is every other individual and corporation doing business in Hawai'i. If REITs paid regular corporate taxes on their profits, that would mean **$60 million** in potential tax revenue every year.

While Hawai'i has more land value tied up in REITs than any other state in the nation, relatively few Hawai'i residents own shares in REITs—we rank 40th in the nation for the number of REIT shareholders as a percentage of the population. As a result, not only is income produced on Hawai'i property leaving the state, but the income that is funneled out of the state is not getting taxed here either.

Even if REITs were able to find a way to avoid half of the corporate taxes that could be assessed, removing the REITs tax loophole would still yield about **$30 million** in new revenue.

HAVE WEALTHY PENSIONERS PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE

Hawai'i is one of only ten states that provides a full exemption of public pension income from taxation.[xiii] The majority of states cap the amount of pension income that is exempt from taxes or limit the exemption to taxpayers below a specific income level.

Providing a reasonable exemption would protect low-income retirees while also ensuring that those fortunate enough to enjoy comfortable retirements pay their fair share. Capping the pension exemption at $25,000 per year—in other words, taxing pension income only above that level—would generate about **$53 million**.

END OFFSHORE TAX HAVEN ABUSE

Corporations use complicated schemes to shift earnings to subsidiaries in offshore tax havens — countries with minimal or no taxes— in order to reduce their tax liability by billions of dollars. The result is that large multinationals have an unfair advantage, avoiding taxes that small local competitors must pay.

Worldwide combined reporting requires a corporation to report their total global profits and the portion of their overall business activity in a given jurisdiction.[xiv] So if a state makes up 2 percent of a company's global business, then 2 percent of their taxable profit would be subject to state tax.

If Hawai'i adopted worldwide combined reporting, it would collect an additional **$38 million** from large multinational corporations.

ELIMINATE THE PROPERTY TAX DEDUCTION

Hawai'i has the lowest residential property tax rate in the nation, or nine times lower than the rate of the highest state.[xv] Even with our high home values, we are 49th in the nation in the portion of state and local revenues collected via property taxes. [xvi]

Because Hawai'i is the only state that funds its public schools entirely from the state general fund, in essence all state taxpayers are subsidizing property owners by providing funding for education that would normally be collected in property taxes.

The federal government allows a deduction for property taxes paid because property taxes are the primary source of funding for public schools in the other states. As a result, Hawai'i's residential property owners receive tax deductions at both the federal and state levels to account for funding that they are *not* providing to education.

Elimination of the property tax deduction would generate about **$34 million** in additional revenue.[xvii]

ADDING IT ALL UP

The revenue estimates described above and summarized in the table below were drawn from a variety of sources and calculations were based on a normally-functioning economy. With Hawai'i currently facing an unprecedented economic downturn, the actual revenues that such options would generate are likely to differ from these estimates. However, they still serve as a guide to where progressive and potentially significant revenues can be found.

Proposed Revenue Option	Maximum Revenue
Federal Reserve Lending	$2.13 billion
Recapture Tax Break from Top 1%	$253 million
Recapture Corporate Tax Break	$103 million
Close Capital Gains Tax Loophole	$100 million
Tax REITs	$60 million
Tax Wealthy Pensioners	$53 million
End Offshore Tax Haven Abuse	$38 million
End Property Tax Deduction	$34 million
Total	**$2.8 billion**

SOURCES

[i] lrb.hawaii.gov/constitution#articlevii
[ii] www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/pressreleases/monetary20200427a.htm
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[ix] files.hawaii.gov/tax/stats/trc/docs2017/Appendix A-State of Hawaii Tax Review Commission Study-A Study of the Hawaii Tax System -PFM_Group_Consulting_LLC.pdf
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[xvii] files.hawaii.gov/tax/stats/trc/docs2017/Appendix A-State of Hawaii Tax Review Commission Study-A Study of the Hawaii Tax System -PFM_Group_Consulting_LLC.pdf

Gmail

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

Testimony(action item G)

lynn zinsius <lynnzinsius@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

to testimony.BOE

Aloha Board Members,

Thank you for all of your efforts during this pandemic. Please continue differentials for our teachers in special education , Hawaiian immersion and hard -to -staff schools. We are supporting our most vulnerable students As a special education teacher , I can state that during normal circumstances the responsibilities are great. Now , during a time when expectations are even greater and the amount of time and effort to support these vulnerable students has exponentially increased. Education funding should not be discontinued temporarily or otherwise. These types of decisions could lead to the exit of even more qualified and passionate teachers.

Sincerely,
Lynn Zinsius
Special Education Teacher
Kaohao School

Gmail

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

Testimony

TK <mtmtkuwa@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern-I am a fourth grade teacher, a mother of 3, and a daughter to 2 elderly parents. I honestly feel that our public schools should NOT open up. There are so many uncertainties and mixed feelings about this"new normal" of doing things that I do not feel comfortable about going back to work or sending my 3 kids back to school. Although the schools are taking/doing the recommended guidelines given by the CDC, who's to say that we(teachers, students, etc.)won't get sick and that everyone will be safe. COVID-19 is something new and unknown. It is said to be evolving and changing into something else as we speak. I really do not want to take the chance of putting myself or my own kids or my parents in harms way. Dr.Park explained something about an "ohana bubble"-knowing where your own ohana has been and who they have been in contact with. A"school bubble" is so not the same. I will have NO idea or control of who my students interacted with safely or not, what they touched, whether they washed their hands correctly, which way the wind is blowing while they have their masks off, or if our AC system is effectively working. Most of all, I would hate to be the reason or location of why someone got sick. Although it stated somewhere that children are more resilient-guess who is interacting with all of them-us adults who are not.We will be the one that is in contact with multiple school bubbles throughout the week. The one that needs to be put in a hard place and enforce social distancing in an environment where we used to teach values of working together and sharing. Please reconsider the opening of schools.I don't think we are ready yet. I understand that we need to get our economy back on track, parents gotta get back to work, kids need to be in school, and there are probably a lot more factors that I don't know of but will it be worth it -if opening schools cause an outbreak or huge cluster of cases? Put yourselves in our shoes and think about it.
Thank you very much!

Tammy Kuwahara
Pu'u Kukui Elem

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lori Ann Koyama <lori.koyama@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Lori Koyama and I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.
I work at Lahaina Intermediate School and i also have a daughter at Princess Nahienaena School.

As a teacher that has worked in Lahaina for the past 24 years, I have seen the high turnover first hand and the impact that it has on school culture. climate, and programs.

I ask that you continue the compensation. We are already starting off the school year with 8 substitutes. We cannot afford to lose any more teachers. The sad part is we are 1 school. multiply our numbers with other hard to staff schools and well we are making an already existing problem even bigger.

Sincerely,
Lori Koyama

Testimony

Kristen Faford <kris10faford@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:57 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing to testify on Action Item G:
Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Kristen Faford. I work at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hilo on the Big Island. This will be my second year in an inclusion classroom setting this upcoming school year. This is my 12th year in Special Education with the HIDOE. Prior to teaching, I was in school pursuing my nursing degree but ended up changing my path to accommodate my toddler. I loved working with children and loved the challenge of teaching them how to read, write, and learn math. And so my journey began.

When I first started in the Special Education teaching program, ARLISE, my starting salary looked promising for such a challenging teaching position. I was told and promised that when I complete the program my starting salary would start at around $45K. I looked forward to my new salary since at the time I was a single parent and my goal was to build home, something many single parents didn't think to do. Contrary to what I hoped would be a great beginning in my new career, the furlough Friday's began and I was left with no choice to start teaching with a starting salary of about 30K. I decided to sacrifice what little I had saved and built a small home anyways instead of paying rent, but I was living in poverty. It was a real struggle as a single parent of a toddler.

I can't tell you how disappointed I was that I could have been making way more income as a nurse working less days per week, and spending way more time with my daughter. You see, my dream was to become a nurse, however, with the growing need for special education teachers, I jumped on the bandwagon to fill the need and make a difference in my community where I grew up and went to elementary school. I know that it was a struggle for me with that salary but because teaching takes so much planning, I was just unable to get a second job to make up the difference.

Fast forward to 2020, I still haven't made up all the income that I have lost from the day that I started teaching. Did you know that in my classes, I have had up to 21 students in one class? Did you know that I have had 21 IEPs to write on top of teaching a full day? Did you know that I have had to sacrifice time with my daughter to write these reports on my own time without any compensation? Did you know that since I started working my health has suffered? I now have carpal tunnel, chronic neck pain and numbness down my arms from being on the computer for so long? Now remarried, the stress of teaching has now also impacted my ability to get and stay pregnant.

When we received the differential this past January, I can't tell you what a difference it made in my attitude and my decision to stick it out in Special Education. I am dual certified to teach both special ed and reg ed. Up until now, I have been working toward adding the regular education field to my teaching license. Although I still haven't even reached the income salary that I should have had by now, the differential has made such an impact on my decisions. I finally feel valued, cared for, and proud of being a special education teacher.

Let me tell you, up until now, have been stretched so thin over these past years with so many hats and teaching duties that I really wanted to go back to school for my nursing degree. I had to take an unpaid leave last year because I was literally just burnt out. That meant I didn't even get a single paycheck last school year. But I didn't care because I was over it. I got to take care of myself for once. Nursing has always been in the back of my mind. Being a special education teacher just isn't worth the stress, my health, and time I am putting in. However, with this new incentive, I finally feel that I feel like I can go an extra mile. A burden has lifted. It's like getting back pay from the past 12 years. It means that much!

Here's the thing. I love working with children. It's my niche. But when I feel unappreciated, undervalued, and burnt, it makes me regretful for choosing this career path. Although I am here for the children, I'm not here to write over 21 IEPs a year. I'm not here to attend over 21 IEPs a year. I'm not here to put in 10-14 hour days with no appreciation or compensation. It's about time we get recognition and an incentive to stay. The differential is the least the BOE can do to show support for what all Special Education Teachers have done. Even with taking PD courses and little pay raises, my salary will never be where it should be even if I am at the max of the pay scale. When I think about what I should've been making these past 12 years it still stings. This differential makes a difference. Please don't take us for granted and leave us in a predicament to leave the field. Please put yourselves in our shoes and keep the only incentive we have to stay. Research shows that many people make 2 or even 3 career changes in their life. If changing careers means I could potentially double my salary, live a healthier lifestyle and stress less, this differential is a really

nominal. I know with the BOE's collaboration, you can find a creative way to continue to fund this special differential. We need your support to do what we do!!!

Mahalo,
Kristen Faford
--
Kristen

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Amanda Hicks <amanda_hicks@baldwin.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Lester Kunimitsu <lester_kunimitsu@baldwin.k12.hi.us>

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

It is unconscionable for the state to act upon this action, because we, as special educators, were defined as a much needed factor in the educational workforce. We know this, and yet we remained calm and let ourselves be a part of the whole HSTA union of bargaining 5 teaching colleagues. When we were presented with the differential at the ending of school year 19-20, it felt as if our efforts were finally realized, that our teaching of vulnerable children and special education students, along with the time it takes writing Individualized Education Plan for 12 students, and meeting with the parents and the 12 students to go over their IEP is stressful, even after 17 years of doing so.

If you renege on the extra compensation, who knows what else the state feels that they can do to the other 9,000 teachers, plus the 4,000 special education teachers? We are on the front line!

I was a general education teacher for 8 years at two elementary schools in South Maui, Kihei School and then the newly built Kamalii Elementary School, so I know where the union power begins, it begins with elementary school teachers and the numbers we represent.

My name is Amanda Hicks, a 25 year veteran teacher, and a special education teacher at H.P. Baldwin High School in Wailuku, Maui for 17 years, and I am highly qualified in Social Studies, English, and have been an inclusion teacher in those subjects, as well as beginning a math inclusion teacher this year. My special education license makes me able to teach sped k-12, and I am also licensed as an elementary school general education teacher (8 years). It is true that elementary teachers can do all subjects, we hold strong. But the challenges are with high school students, especially special education students, where sped teachers, experienced sped teachers, are patient and have many strategies of teaching to meet the learning styles of these students, something that newer teachers may acquire in 5-6 years, maybe even more. I am reaching 25 years as a teacher who sees retirement is in sight, but loving a challenge, and if God permits, I am contemplating for the longest haul of 30 years, and a step 14B. Do not take what you have given us, what we have worked so hard for and had been recognized for, because teachers are tired of being financially abused.

Amanda Hicks

Special Education Teacher (Social Studies, English, inclusion, and now math inclusion)

H.P. Baldwin High School

7/23/2020

Hawai‘i Board of Education
Attn: Chair Catherine Payne
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: Comments on DOE’s Re-Entry Plan, deferred from 7/9/2020

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s (HIDOE) re-entry criteria for the 20-21 SY, in light of the on-going COVID-19 crisis.

Together For Our Keiki (T.F.O.K.) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to advocate and create a diverse and inclusive community for our keiki by empowering parents and caregivers and educating local stakeholders. We know it is difficult to develop and determine a course of action that will work for everyone. However, we also believe our students, their parents, and our teachers have a right to feel safe while accessing quality educational instruction. Many of our concerns will likely be echoed by the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association (HSTA), parents, and concerned members of our community.

In addition to the comments we submitted on 7/9/20, we would like to ask the Board of Education (BOE), to the best of their ability, to ensure the following:

1. Offer an online option for every teacher, teaching staff, and student who is unable or unwilling to return to the school campus under current COVID conditions. In some documents and hearings, it has been stated that this will be an option at all schools, however that is not what is being reported to us by teachers, parents, and related service providers.

2. Maintain teaching differentials, which were intended as incentives for teachers to teach in high needs, woefully understaffed positions. Even though the state and country are experiencing significant economic disruption, we must prioritize these educators. These hard to staff positions for some of our most vulnerable keiki will become even further negatively impacted by removing this incentive to do so, especially during increasingly risky and potentially unsafe working conditions as a result of this global pandemic we are experiencing.

3. We need safe schools and community conditions before we can return to our already overcrowded, understaffed, and under-supported public school campuses. While we understand everyone is distracted, we also wanted to bring to light the fact that several prospective teachers have applied for the 20-21 school year, some months ago, without any follow up from the DOE. It is no news that we struggle with teacher recruitment and retainment. What may be news is that we have teachers waiting in the wings —but how long should they wait?

We know this is a difficult time for our state, our school system, and the BOE. It is a difficult time for parents, teachers, keiki, and community members too. It is a tough time for us all, which is why we must push aside politically-fueled opposing views and typical niceties to come together for our keiki —and our teachers too.

Sincerely,

Lara Bollinger, JD, BCBA, LBA
Vice President, Together For Our Keiki
On Behalf of the Board, Advocates, & Ambassadors
www.forourkeiki.com

Gmail

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

Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations

Deanna Kackley <deanna.kackley@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:06 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Liberty Furchgott <Liberty.Furchgott@k12.hi.us>

Please take no action to change the supports for “hard-to-staff-areas.” Please leave in place all the structural and operational pieces we have, for serving our beloved `opio, thus far. Focus your work instead on obtaining the state-level support coming down the pipe through the Hero's Act - and designing all the operational and delivery mechanisms required of the Heros Act.

When responding to an epidemic, the last thing that comes to mind is creating further scarcity. The State has worked hard and tirelessly to buttress very essential and necessary resources in order to serve the students, particularly in the “hard-to-staff” areas. The countless strategies developed over the years, taking valuable time from educational leaders and universities, need to remain in place. The teacher shortage is being addressed on a multi-faceted level, using strategies and incentives that were crafted to change the longitudinal outcomes for our students. Now is not the time to dismantle the years of work.

One of the essential pillars of the strategy is teacher retention. Teachers remain where they have support! Teachers who are burdened with the systemic shortcomings on top of the demanding service required of a rigorous educational delivery will not remain. Please allow the least amount of structural disruption for this year. Teachers and administrators are earnestly scrambling to meet the design challenges of this COVID-19 instructional year. Asking a teaching professional to bear an unfair burden - across so many dimensions - is highly discouraged. The Boards’ continuance of support of our choice to teach in hard-to-staff areas is wise and will reflect in the teacher retention numbers which the state has been working for years and years to try to solve.

Mahalo nui loa for your valuable time, your leadership service to our state, and your consideration of this email.

Deanna J.K. Kackley
Honokaa High and Intermediate
Cell: (808) 756.0914

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

continue differential pay

Margarette Barsatan <margarette.barsatan@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:07 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:
My testimony would request to continue differential pay due to the high cost of living on the small island of Lana'i. It only impacts the cost of living but being able to provide extra for the students. I have had to limit time with students after work because of needing a second job to support my family and I. I will no longer be able to provide the extra school activities by taking a second job to afford the cost of living here. It impacts my family and students if the pay cut occurs. If this occurs it may take more teachers away because the pay cut will have them searching for higher paying jobs.
Please take into consideration that the Teachers that work here do extra to begin with due to the small school environment. We wear a lot of hats by coaching, being class advisors..and so forth but cutting the pay will prevent us from continuing to support the school. We are small and close so this puts more strain on our already filled schedules to support school and community.
Take into consideration our expensive cost of living for gas, groceries, electric...travel for supplies or doctor appointments, It is already a strain financially and now it will not be possible if there is a pay cut.
thank you
MB

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

Shortage Differentials and School Reopening

Cai <cai_mir@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Catherine Davis. I am a teacher at Kamali'i Elementary in Maui District on the island of Maui. I am submitting testimony in support of continuing the shortage differentials. These salary adjustments encourage teachers and student teachers to consider a path in education addressing the needs of our most vulnerable students and communities. Special education teachers experience some of the highest attrition rates of any school employee. Special education and general education teachers are experiencing burnout and increasing anxiety due to changing job conditions. The shortage differential makes a difference. For the first time since teaching in Hawaii, I have not had to be overly concerned with my budget. I have been able to do some home repairs and invest in my community.

I moved to Maui in 2006 from Colorado. I didn't know anyone here but I sold most everything I owned and moved with every intention of staying. I have stayed at great expense because living here has been all about aloha and being part of a larger ohana and community. After all these years, I have friends and extended family, as well as, wonderful colleagues with whom I share a mission. Each day we come together as a team to support our keiki and local families. We are doing our level best to keep up the good work but it is heartbreaking to see teachers come and go, many of whom could not bear the financial sacrifices in order to support their families. I do not want to lose any more teachers! We need your help.

Please think of the future of education in Hawaii and provide continued funding of the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard to staff positions. This shows that we as a state value our hardworking teachers. Our teachers have shown courage and professionalism in this time of uncertainty. Please support them to support our keiki and community.

Additionally, I would like to add that the palpable anxiety in our 'voluntary', unpaid staff meetings is increasing as the school start date nears and the daily COVID-19 cases increase. I personally have spent almost $200 already to secure PPE and other supplies as I am in the high-risk category for infection. Some days I have to corral my mind and take deep breaths to calm myself. There has not been enough time to plan and prepare. As you know at the beginning of each year teachers have two days to set up their classrooms and two days for administrative business. Our teachers have been participating in planning over the summer and not getting paid for it. We are dedicated to our schools and students, but please don't ask us to go back to buildings until it is safe. Is it truly necessary and prudent to open school buildings before a vaccine is developed? We are not ready.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine M Davis, M.Ed.
480 Kenolio Rd 5-201
Kihei, Maui, HI 96753
Kamali'i Elementary
Maui District

Gmail

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

Testimony

Bryceton Carvalho <bryceton@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:24 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern,

My name is Bryceton Kekoa Carvalho. I am a teacher at Leihōkū Elementary School. Please accept this as my testimony on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I have been teaching for 8 years. I have served my entire tenure on the Leeward Coast not only because I am from the coast, but mainly because I always wanted to be a part of the solution to ending the teacher shortage that has plague my complex area for so long, since I attended Nānāikapono Elementary School decades ago. I left a well paying hotel career to become a teacher. Needless to say I took a HUGE hit on my income, even with a master's degree. Although I knew that teaching was vital to building strong communities and therefore a tough job, I didn't realize how much work it was going to be in comparison to my previous career. So when the DOE came out with their promises to end the teacher shortage through the use of differentials I felt encouraged to know that we were being heard and something was happening to help us. Since these differentials took place, I have been able to better support my own family.

In addition to the financial freedom that the differentials provide for my family, they also provide a sense of appreciation. To me, I feel like the differentials are a way that the DOE acknowledges the hard work that we do. As we all know teaching on the coast is not the same as teaching in other districts; hence, the disproportionate shortages that we see, which are due to teachers leaving the profession or transferring to more desirable school districts. An unintended result of these differentials is the fact that I decided to muster up the courage to pursuit a position as an inclusion teacher. Without this incentive, I am not sure that I would have determined the added work and effort as being worth doing. Sped teachers are some of the hardest working, most qualified teachers on any campus. As such, I believe that they should be compensated as such.

As mentioned above, I have seen countless teachers leave the profession in pursuit of better pay to support their families in Hawaii. How can you blame them? Given that many teachers hold advance degrees and possess knowledge and skills that make them ideal candidates in almost any industry, differentials are the perfect way to both attract and retain the best teachers that we find.

Our keiki deserve the best that we can provide. The DOE must not go back on their promises to ensure that they do get the best. I am afraid that if differentials are suspended, we will lose many teachers and leave our keiki with unqualified or under qualified teachers. Is that ok with you?

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Bryceton Kekoa Carvalho
Teacher, Leihōkū Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony for Action Item “G” July 23

Shana Brown <shanabanana74@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:26 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you regarding the Action Item “G” on your agenda for the July 23, 2020 meeting.

I am a teacher who was recruited to teach on Kaua’i as a result of the shortage of Special Education teachers. I taught in Special Education for 4 years at Waimea Canyon Middle School and then moved to General Education at King Kaumuali’i Elementary for the last 2 years. After seeing that I had an administration at King Kaumuali’i Elementary that truly understands the IEP process I was feeling confident to move back to Special Education in light of the new differential put in place this year. The differential played a major role in my decision because Special Education requires more work, expertise, and a much higher level of liability. I was really appreciative that this was finally being recognized.

So, now that I am ready to step back into that role in 9 days, I am being told the differential may be discontinued. Yet, my work will not. I can’t request to change my line at this point. I was hoping to quit one of my extra jobs so I could focus completely on my full-time position. I truly understand that you couldn’t foresee a pandemic, but you can certainly predict the loss of more educators if you choose to go back on the word we were given just as recently as May that these differentials would remain intact.

My years as a Special Education teacher in this district have been frustrating because the turnover is so overwhelming. Every time a teacher leaves, students lose out. Teachers are stretched very thin and feel as though they can’t perform at a high level as a result. What prompted me to leave Special Education in the first place was a year when we had 3 Special Education teachers quit in the middle of the year. It was my breaking point. I ended up with over 25 students on my caseload (some of whom I barely knew and many who had severe cases). I was teaching in a fully self-contained classroom with students who had really profound needs for 3 periods (usually this would have been a full line due to the intense needs), ELA inclusion for 2 periods, and reading pullout intervention for 2 periods. It was exhausting and defeating. I did it so that the kids who lost a teacher didn’t end up having untrained subs all year like I had seen in the prior years. Every year we lost at least 2 Special Education teachers during the year and many were recruited from the mainland. That is a huge loss financially for our district.

We are failing our students by taking away incentives to recruit and retain these highly trained educators. I strongly believe many law suits can also be prevented by having certified, qualified Special Education teachers. This need is even greater as we embark on unchartered waters. We need teachers who fully understand the IDEA laws and how to accommodate students properly.

This is an investment that will save our district thousands of dollars in the long run. I know other teachers who made the switch to Special Education with this differential as a major incentive. Please do not increase distrust and animosity by going back on your word. We need more qualified teachers for our exceptional keiki and that will surely be the wrong message to send to potential candidates as well as to our communities.

With Aloha,
Shana Brown, M.Ed.
3rd Grade Special Education
King Kaumuali’i Elementary School
Kaua'i

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lisa Maria <lisa.on.lanai@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:46 AM

Re: Action Item G

Aloha board members,
While I am very sympathetic with the budget concerns the DOE and the state must contend with, I write to urge you not to discontinue the extra compensation recently given to teachers on Lanai, and other islands.

I have taught at LHES for 11 years. We are a hard-to-staff school, and there has been a revolving door on special education positions here, in particular. I know for certain that 2 colleagues had planned to leave this summer, and the extra pay changed their minds. I know others who were debating leaving, and are now regretting they did not.

I know each of you knows what chronic teacher attrition does to students, admin, and the teachers who stay. But you may not know how expensive our groceries are on Lanai, or that our gas costs more here than anywhere in the country. We have no rent control, and almost zero availability. Plus, our remote location is a plus only for the minority of teachers. With all this going against us, we do not need the recent bonus taken away so soon. Esp. when the governor honored other union's negotiated raises a few weeks ago.

I thank you for your consideration, and for your hard work amidst the challenge of covid-19. I truly appreciate what you are doing for our schools.

Lisa Galloway, PhD
Lana'i High School
PO Box 630630
Lana'i City, HI 96763
(808) 565 7900

Gmail

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

Testimony and suggestion

Seanna Wallis <seannawallis@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have an idea to save you money!!

My name is Seanna Daise and I teach 5th grade at Princess Nahienaena in Lahaina. I'm testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My idea to save you money: unless the DOE intends on hiring higher quality SPED teachers, I suggest the SPED differential matches that of general education teachers in hard to staff locations. General education teachers are easier to come by, true, but in my experience, we also do more work. You will save money by lowering the SPED differentials but not losing way too many of your teachers.

The differentials are necessary to maintain teachers here. We already have budget cuts due to this pandemic where we will be risking our lives and student to attend school and using our own funds to provide supplies. Those of use who teach here love our aina and our keiki and a society is built on raising our keiki right. Bottom line - taking away differentials is taking away quality teachers who deserve a livable salary away from our keiki.

Thank you. Please make the right decision.

Seanna Daise

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony: Look what this school district is doing;it's so much better than rushing! Their teachers may not be happy, but at least they have a clear plan in place before opening, unlike Hawaii.

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:55 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Massachusetts Teachers Unions Unveil Four-Phased Reopening Plan

https://www.wgbh.org/news/education/2020/07/15/massachusetts-teachers-unions-unveil-four-phased-reopening-plan

Massachusetts educators argue against returning everyone to classrooms in the fall.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony: Temporary Discontinuation of Extra Compensation

Jeni Baird <jeni.baird@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

First, I send this email with respect for all the decisions you are trying to make right now. It is not an easy time and I acknowledge finding funding to cope with the variety of changes needed during an upcoming economic crisis one of your greatest challenges!

I am a Special Education Teacher at Sunset Beach Elementary school. My professional background has been a journey of being a strategic HR business partner at an Aerospace company and then a director of a nonprofit that supported adults with disabilities. Through helping adults with disabilities, I realized if they had been given a better education and more strategies to support an independent future, they would be living a more vibrant life. This is when I made the massive career switch to teaching. I love it more than any other job I have ever had, however, it is the weirdest "business" I have ever worked in. In a government-run industry that profits our future, we are constantly provided with a scarcity mindset. My hope is my testimony helps motivate a change in our system.

As Special Education Teachers in the state of Hawaii, we hold 2 job titles and up until the extra differential, we were not compensated as such. We are teachers AND we are Care Coordinators. This is rarely acknowledged. Also at my school, there is no SSC clerk so we as care coordinators are also responsible for coordinating meetings. For any given student, the communication and documentation for this can take hours to align 5-7 different busy schedules. The documentation we have been required to do during COVID-19 has been doubled, if not tripled, in order to prove good faith efforts to continue special education services. I have been care coordinating for grades 4-6 with 22 students, care coordinating for 13. I needed to use my personal cell phone to make calls and handle sensitive situations. I was holding more meetings than ever to coordinate with parents, gen ed teachers, the special education team, EAs, PPTs, and the school administration. As you may know, our IEPs are becoming longer and more data and information is being required to continue special education services. During the distance learning experience last school year, I was putting in 8-10 hour days in order to meet my students' needs as well as collaborate with general education teachers at my school. During this summer break, parents had my cell phone and the calls and texts with concerns continued to come in. When there is good relationships, there is transformation. I love my students and their parents and because of this genuine care, I could not help but respond to keep the relationships positive.

Like I said earlier, this has been the most challenging job but I love it with all my soul, and do not want to change. However, I do work 2 jobs in order to survive the cost of living in Hawaii. Also, due to COVID-19, I am unable to work at the second job and lost that source of income to make ends meet. During each pay period, I have personally funded supplies my students may need just trying to find ways to support them, which is often through trial and error as each student is reinforced by different interests and needs.

As we look towards opening schools for the 2020-2021 school year, there are many uncertain situations that are requiring decisions that will impact our special education educators. One that I have heard of is how special education teachers are going to be required to be on-campus teachers 5 days a week, where general education teachers may be provided other options. There is also the anticipation of students who regressed and may need compensatory special education services. I also have a few special education students whose families are requesting distance learning options I will need to prepare for alongside the curriculum for face-to-face students. Our school is moving to a face-to-face model where I will be a general education teacher with the higher needs special education students in my classroom. I will be care coordinating for students across the school, coordinating EA, collecting and compiling data, while also doing all the responsibilities of a general education teacher. The workload will be consuming. It is with this testimony I plead to maintain the extra compensation differential. It is what is fair - to pay people with two job titles as they perform the work of the two very important and very legally driven roles that we actively participate in day to day. I believe this is true for the majority of special education teachers throughout the state.

Mahalo for reading this. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or to gain further insight. May you each be blessed in your personal lives and find progress in the decisions you are making.

Jeni Baird
Sunset Beach Elementary, Special Education Teacher
CELL PHONE: (808) 636-7323

EMAIL ADDRESS: jeni.baird@k12.hi.us

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

Testimony

Dukie Akioka <kumudukie@pueo.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,
My name is Tony Duke Akioka. I am an educator at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'O Pu'ohala (Hawaiian Immersion School).

Please reject Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

These compensations are necessary for attracting and retaining teachers who are highly qualified in English AND Hawaiian medium of instruction. These additional qualifications and workload should be respected and compensated.

Mahalo,
Tony Duke Akioka

Gmail

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

No pay cuts please

dthomas440@aol.com <dthomas440@aol.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Donell Thomas. Teacher/Community Member, Aunt

Finance/General business

Agenda Item: pay cuts to teachers

Aloha. I am writing to oppose any pay cuts for teachers, please do not cut any pay. Please do not cut the hard to staff differentials. We cannot afford to lose teachers as many will, quit or leave if they cannot afford to live in hard to staff locations.
Mahalo,
Donell Thomas

Gmail

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

Discontinuation of Compensation Testimony

Britney Malhotra <britneymalhotra@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Britney Malhotra. I have been a special education teacher for 5 years. I am currently a special education preschool teacher at Waialua Elementary School.

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

The discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education would drastically affect my financial situation. While I am not a parent who needs to provide for their families, I continue to own a lot of money in student loans. I pay anywhere between about $950 a month in student loans payments and these payments will continue to be made for the next 10-15 years. I do not have a savings account and I live paycheck to paycheck. I work well over 40 hours a week according to my contract and salary and am constantly looking for additional ways to make money in order to live comfortably and be able to feed myself, take care of my home, my classroom, and some of my older family members back on the mainland.

The extra compensation has provided me with some security to that and would be very difficult to go back to similar pay to general education teachers. Especially when there is so much work to be done with special education. I do not want to leave my special education position; however, I might have to consider other options at a higher pay in order to make ends meet.

Mahalo for your time,
Britney Malhotra
Special Education Preschool
Waialua Elementary

Gmail

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

Differential for special education shortage teachers

Karen Kojima <karenko726@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:07 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I would like to submit testimony in support of the pay differential for special education teachers in shortage areas. I have been teaching blind children for over 25 years, and throughout my career there has been a teacher shortage in this area. The training colleges are on the mainland or through distance learning., and this compounds the problem.
This is a very specialized field in which teachers of the visually impaired prepare materials in braille, adapt regular education materials for the blind, teach white cane skills, and a variety of other specialized instruction. In the Leeward district, there are approximately 75 students served.

Earlier this year, our understanding was the money was allocated for The differential. We were promised that half of the money would be given last school year, and the remainder, this school year. I don't understand how the BOE can go back on their word. I know that we are in a difficult financial situation with the pandemic and its repercussions, but this is money that was promised and allocated prior to the pandemic.

Please consider that in order to keep quality trained professionals in this specialty area of blindness, we need to have the financial and administrative support of the BOE.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Karen Kojima
Teacher of the Visually Impaired

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Vijay Thangaraj <v_thangaraj@lahaina.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE ,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Vijay Thangaraj. I teach at King Kamehameha lll school in Lahaina, Maui. In the past 15 years we have had to struggle to keep our teaches here in Maui. Many young teachers had to take on second jobs to after school to be able to live in Lahaina. Now that we are encountering the additional burden of dealing with the virus its become even harder to keep our teachers here. I see large corporations and other businesses getting help from the Federal government to help them through these difficult times. Why not us in Education.

I think we should be the first group to be helped first. Please re consider you to discontinue the shortage differentials pay for Maui. As you well know we need good teachers keep Hawaii strongwomen and healthy.

Thank you.

Vijay Thangaraj
King Kamehameha School
Lahaina Maui.

reject deferral of differentials

Amy Suzuki <amyclbustamante@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Amy Suzuki, I am a special education teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School. I am disheartened that I have had to write to advocate for the well-being of educators in the State of Hawaii for a second time in less than a month. Today, I would like to address the motion to temporarily suspend differentials provided to teachers in hard-to-staff positions, including low income areas, special education, and Hawaiian Emergent schools; and request that you respectfully reconsider.

Because you all are well-versed in the teacher shortage here in Hawaii, you know that prior to differentials, 500 special educator positions remained vacant and filled by emergency hires who are unqualified for the position. On average, a special education teacher teaches approximately 8 students with special needs; that's 4,000 students with unique needs who went to school and were serviced by unqualified adults - 4,000 students that we possibly left neglected.

Considering Hawaii is already home to the least paid teachers in the nation (when factoring cost of living), it is imperative to offer something to recruit and retain teachers - even more so to maintain specialized positions. Since becoming a teacher in 2012, I have seen a total of 8 special education teachers come and go through Aliamanu Elementary School. That's approximately 1 per year. I quickly worked my way up the seniority list at work because of the high special education teacher turnover rate. It is rare to see a year that we will have the same special education team as the previous year. Each year it seems as if our team shrinks a little and being unable to find more qualified teachers for hire, our workload grows. Taking away an already promised differential is a gesture that would make our state look unstable and unreliable.

I can attest that the differential has held me from considering a transfer into a general education line of teaching. Taking a general education teaching line would mean 10-15 less of after school meetings for me to attend per year, and 8-12 less reports per year I'd have to write. It would provide me the opportunity to follow a school-wide curriculum easier with less differentiation.

During this current global pandemic, you would be asking special education teachers who are among the most at risk of exposure, to return to the classroom and risk their lives, and consequently the lives of their family members, while taking away what has already been promised. On a daily basis, we are expected to work with students who do not yet know how to respect personal space, have not learned about personal hygiene, or do not have enough skills for self-care. We are going into this school year expecting to have to overcome students' sensory needs and issues in order to teach them to wear a mask. There is no way we will be able to implement 6 feet of distance with these students and accomplish our jobs. It is not an easy job and you leave us feeling as if we are being taken advantage of for our kind hearts and passion for teaching.

I am calling on you to consider the message behind the gesture. Reject the "temporary" deferral of differentials in the name of respecting teachers and improving the education system in Hawaii for our keiki. Prioritize education.

Gmail

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

Shortage differential

Vashti Daise <vashtidaise@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm asking all those in charge of making the decision on the shortage differential to please not make those cuts. As a veteran teacher and in the position in life I am currently in I do not require the differential but most of the teachers I teach with are being underpaid compared to the cost of living here in West Maui particularly, and cutting out the differentials will affect our ability to keep our teachers. I think the differential needs to be kept as promised although I could see making the special ed teachers differential be equal to the regular teachers differential. In all of my 30+ years of experiences special ed teachers do not work harder than regular teachers. This would save a little money. I know we all care about our community and the education and well-being of our keiki, and I truly believe that part of caring for them means that we have qualified teachers without high turnover rates.
Mahalo for listening,
Vashti Daise

Testimony

Kristine Okumura <kristineokumura@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi, as a special education teacher I am kindly asking for you to reconsider taking back the differential that was already granted to us.

By taking it away from us, there is a lot of harm and damage that will occur. Personally I feel that due to frustration and anger, many teachers may not be capable of performing to their best abilities due to the STRESS that we'll be under.. this means that the students...our future, will not be getting a quality education.

Also, as a working parent, I have children of my own who will lose out if I were to have to take a pay cut. My son is supposed to start preschool, and unfortunately as a middle class Asian, there aren't any monies that are granted to help me have to PAY for his early education. Another thing is my mortgage...with out the differential, I won't be able to afford it.

Why take away from us teachers...the ones who are preparing the next generation for our future? Why was there so much money given out per week for the unemployed? Especially when most don't even earn that sort of income on a normal basis?!

With all of this being said, I really hope that there is another way to go about this.

Thank you,
A very concerned special education teacher and parent

To whom it may concern,

My name is Madilyn Conroy and I am writing this on behalf of the differential for Special Education, Hawaiian Immersion, and Hard to Staff teachers. I currently just finished my first year teaching here in Hawaii and I am ready to begin year two. I believe that the differential should not be taken away because the goal was to help bring interest and help these teachers are sometimes overloaded with responsibilities due to the lack of personnel that is qualified to do so. With these goals in mind the Board of Education (BOE) and Department of Education (DOE) have not given it the chance it deserves to see its success. I say this because COVID-19 happened only 3 months after this differential was put into place. Many people who may have considered going back to school to earn a Special Education degree to be able to fill those hard to staff positions had to take a step back and really look at finances to make sure they could support themselves or families in the time where many didn't know where the next paycheck would come. This differential and its potential deserves the time and energy it took to originally be put into place and not just ripped out of the fingertips of the people it was intended to support. My next concern is with how hard I worked this year to support my students and families. This differential allowed me to support them in ways that without it I wouldn't have been able to because I was able to purchase resources and be even more effective in a time of distance learning. If the goal is to support teachers like me to either stay on island and continue to fight and persevere, taking it away is not going to do that. The excuse of COVID affecting the economy is not a reason to take this away when it was budgeted and discussed in detail that it could be done. I know there was a circumstance outside of anyone's control, but there are ways to work around defunding teachers even more and supporting the staff you currently have. I am sad that this is even a discussion to have knowing the finance as circumstances of our current state of life. Especially with making teachers go back to in person these are the students that will need the most help after the extended time off and require even more of the teachers in these positions time and energy that they should be compensated for.

I urge the board and department of education to really consider what this might do to the teachers they are going to take this from and for the reason they are considering it. Again it isn't because we gave it 5 years and it didn't help people want to move or join special education.

With great pleasure to teach in Hawaii,

Madilyn Conroy
Special Education Teacher

Reject Proposal for Action Item VI- G

Leimomi Kaʻaihili Leong <leimomi_kaaihili_leong@anuenue.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai e ka Papa Alaka'i o ka Hoʻonaʻauao,

I am a teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ʻo Ānuenue, Honolulu District, O'ahu.

I would like to urge you to **reject the proposal** to temporarily discontinue the extra compensation for teachers of Special Education, Hawaiian Immersion and Hard to fill areas.

This upcoming school year 2020-2021 and next school year 2021-2022 is when we will truly begin to see the impacts of the differential pay for those positions that require an extra skills set.

The DOE has consistently been underfunded by the State. The State needs to be held accountable to funding the DOE without cuts to the Public Education System as we are already underfunded and undervalued.

Seasoned teachers have transferred to those hard to fill positions, college students have enrolled in teacher preparation programs, and others like myself have invested in becoming licensed in other areas because the BOE has recognized the unique skill set that Special Education and Hawaiian Immersion teachers are required to have in order to do our job effectively.

I fear for the major repercussions that come from unmet promises of differential pay and the hard work that many have just begun.

Teachers should not be the first budget cuts as we get through this COVID-19 crisis. This 2020-2021 school year, teachers overall will be doing twice the amount of work. Hawaiian Immersion teachers will start at a **disadvantage** because as we move toward digital learning, Hawaiian Immersion teachers will need to create, edit, translate, and adjust to digital platforms and curriculum resources that were developed for English only learners.

Special Education teachers will be overly exposed to students that attend everyday and work harder to **"catch up" students with learning disabilities** that were majorly effected by the stay home order.

Please continue to support and acknowledge the front line of education, teachers, by rejecting the Proposal to discontinue the compensation for those teachers that will be

working even harder during this COVID-19 time.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Leimomi Kaʻaihili Leong
Special Education Teacher
at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ʻo Ānuenue
Honolulu District, Oʻahu

This e-mail is being sent by a student or employee of Kula Kaiapuni ʻO Ānuenue.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Cindie McAnish <ohikiguys@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I've been a special education teacher in the State of Hawaii for over 20 years, working in the Kau, Kea'au, Pahoa complex, where we service one of the most disadvantaged socio-economic populations in the state.

Over the years, I have spent thousands of dollars of my own money on school supplies and classroom needs. I've spent countless hours writing IEPs at home, on weekends and on holidays. I've stayed late, gone in early and spent many weekends in my classroom, trying to stay on top of all the extra duties involved with special education. And, I've considered leaving the profession in some of those darkest moments.

When we were given the special education differential, it made a huge difference in my morale and determination to stay in this profession. But now, the thought of all that extra special education work, in the midst of this crisis, without the benefit of the differential makes me want to throw in the towel. I feel the BOE needs to keep their promise to us special education teachers, in hard to fill areas and keep the differentials in place, as well as the hard to fill bonuses.

I'd like to know if the Superintendent, or others in charge, are taking a $10,000 pay cut this year? Or, a pay cut of any kind? If not, then that simply isn't fair to expect us to and continue working on failed promises! At this point, I am looking into retirement options.

Thank you,

Cynthia McAnish
Special Education Department Head, Kea'au High School
English Resource Teacher, grade 10

Testimony

Alakai Fernandez <alakai42@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:59 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

"Testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year"

Aloha BOE Members,

Cutting teachers' pay may seem like a good idea to save money, but it ends up hurting more than just teachers and their families. A reduction in state worker pay would hurt also hurt local Hawai'i businesses and inflict more damage to the economy while of course most importantly, negatively affecting students' learning and outcomes. A strong reason to not cut teacher salaries is the differentials were overwhelmingly approved by the BOE/DOE, and they were beginning to work. The pay differentials helped retain and recruit teachers to into shortage areas. DOE data collection shows that teachers entering into Sped positions increased by 29%, while 18% more teachers opted to teach at hard to staff schools. This program was accomplishing what it was mandated to do. More students in geographically remote schools and more Special needs students would have a qualified teacher for 2020-2021. Eliminating the differential would potentially undo this positive trend. Ultimately, this would be a short-sighted and foolish decision. Instead of bolstering the number of qualified teachers in Sped, Hawaiian Immersion and hard to fill schools, this pay cut will end up encouraging teachers to retire early and thus leave an even worse equity gap in the quality of teaching for the most vulnerable students. Who will suffer the most from this decision? As usual, it's the students because they will be taught by unqualified teachers who may or may not stay for the whole year, who aren't experienced in effective teaching methods, who aren't going to have the time, energy and experience to develop relationships with students. Time and again, educational experts say that it's the caring, personal relationship teachers develop with their students that increases the students' learning exponentially. In this time of chaos and upheaval even veteran teachers are grappling with how to go about reaching and teaching their students. Long-term subs and newbie teachers will struggle now more than ever to make 1-2 in person meetings per week effective and meaningful learning experiences. Furthermore, for those teachers who feel that everyone else is suffering, so we should suffer too I say, absolutely not! This is exactly why we are dues-paying members of HSTA. Workers in the private sector might accuse teachers of being greedy because private sector jobs are taking a hit, so we should sacrifice too. If teachers took a pay cut this would not give back jobs in the tourism industry or any other sector. The solution to fixing our ailing economy isn't to make more people suffer, but for our state government to increase spending. One important way to do that is to keep government workers onboard at full salary, which ensures that they can keep paying for housing, food, transportation and other necessities. It's important to remember the state has options for bringing in revenues. They simply need to political will and backbone to do it, because available streams of revenue can and should come from those making the most money. Rather than focusing attention in cutting funding from teachers and schools, elected leaders should look at RAISING revenues to meet spending needs. The money is there. At the end of the day, teachers ARE essential workers. It was said by many that school closures this past spring raised awareness among many parents as to the importance of teachers, schools and the services they provide. Society supposedly has a newfound appreciation of how difficult teaching is. In particular, it takes a special skill set as well as years of experience to be an effective special education teacher, and Hawai'ian immersion teacher.

The BOE, DOE and Legislators need to keep their word by keeping these teachers' pay differentials intact. Going back on their word to fund these differentials will hurt teachers, students and our local economy. I encourage you to read the HBPC progressive revenue options for 8 different ways to avoid these damaging spending cuts.

Sincerely,

Drew Fernandez
Special Education Teacher, Hilo

Gmail

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

Testimony

janis prinslow <janis.prinslow@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
This is testimony in regards to ending pay differential for special education and hard to staff teaching positions.
When I moved here 15 years ago with a child in high school and my friends asked how the schools in Hawaii were I told them there was great curriculum and teachers! I told them the worst part was the lack of continuity because teachers were always leaving!
Finally we got some incentive that was helping to keep teachers in these hard to fill positions and you want to snatch it away already. It wasn't in place long enough to make a difference. I would not recommend to parents that they put their child in any school without highly qualified teachers. We need to have good, qualified teachers in all positions in all schools!
Janis Prinslow
2nd grade teacher
Holualoa School
Big Island

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Differentials

Ricky <Rikson@aol.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

Taking away pay differentials from the special education department at this will deepen the psychological impact being a special educator.

As a special educator, getting the differentials meant somebody actually realizes how much overtime is actually needed to service and coordinate for our students, taking this pay away will really make me consider other options to make a living.

Thank you,

Ricky

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony - Action Item G

Dacia C <daciavou@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My two kids attend Pu'ohala Elementary School with the Hawaiian Immersion Program. Please see my testimony for Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

At Pu'ohala Elementary Kaiapuni, we have great teachers who do wonderful work with our children. They spend a great deal of time with our children daily and I would not want to lose them. These teachers have extra qualifications that allow them to teach this special and growing native language. It's so important to have these qualified individuals so they can continue to help our children develop in the best way possible. I humbly ask as a parent to push for this compensation to allow incentive for those who are already qualified and to spark interest for those who are not already qualified.

Mahalo for your time,
Dacia Cockett

Gmail

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

Please Continue Teacher Shortage Differentials

Reanna Badua <rcbadua@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Reanna Badua and I am a special education teacher at Keaau Middle School on the Big Island. I am writing to ask that the BOE rejects the proposal to discontinue funding for teacher shortage differentials. I understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the state's overall revenue and budget. Pulling funds from education will have a detrimental effect on the state for decades to come. Students will lose qualified teachers and not have a quality education. This lack of quality teachers will only perpetuate the low income and low education within this community and state.
As a SPED teacher in a Title 1 school, my paycheck barely allows me as a single person to meet my basic needs. I have dreams and higher aspirations with qualifications to move into other professions, such as my previous career in healthcare. I chose teaching to give back to the children, to give them better opportunities, and to improve the community that raised me. As much as I care about my community, I also need a job that pays me what I am worth. Hawaii has continued to struggle with keeping their teachers, especially qualified teachers like myself. Deducting the meager pay that we already receive may be a quick solution to the state, but it will cost the state more in the long run should BOE choose to discontinue teacher differentials.
I hope the BOE considers my testimony. Thank you for your time.

Best,
Reanna Badua

--
Reanna Badua

To all who are making decision on behalf of the children of Hawaii,

My name is Rachel Furutani. I am a retired teacher that has worked with Preschool, Kindergarten and First grade students for majority of my career. My last eight years I worked as a curriculum coordinator for my school and interacted with all grade levels.

I currently have one grandchild attending public school here on Kauai. She is going to be in First grade. Both her parents are school teachers. My daughter teaches First grade and my son-in-law teaches at the High School.

I've been following along with all the decisions the State of Hawaii Department of Education has been making for all the schools, teachers, students, and parents. I fully understand and agree the children need to keep learning and schools are a big part of their learning along with their parents. It is my understanding that the DOE Superintendent along with her planning team gave the schools three options and they could decide which option was best for their community. It seems a lot more has been left up to the schools on how to go about implementing their chosen option and all the **safety measures** that go along with it . I can go on and on with what the scenario is looking like at many schools and how uncomfortable many teachers and parents are with so many unanswered questions. The common response seems to be "we're working on it". You should not be working on it without total imput from the teachers! They are the ones who will be able to tell you if things will work or not. While planning on these these important issues, DOE should have had each district have Classroom teachers from different grade levels involved. Especially when you are talking about how to do things with Kindergarten and First Grade children. Administrators and District personal don't know enough about the actual day to day situations in a classroom to decide if things would work or not.

I feel there are so many loop holes due to the poor planning and decision making process. Due to this, I **strongly feel reopening of school needs to be pushed back, bring the teachers back to work with administration on how to implement their school choice so everyone feels safe and knows how things are going to be done.** These decisions are being made in regards to peoples lives and I feel, not enough thought and protection has been considered. When one receives answers to **so many unanswered questions , "we're working on it."** and students are returning in two weeks**, it scares me!**

I beg for your consideration on giving the schools more time to work this out for the protection of everyone. Teachers are due back on July 29th . Schools will then have all staff having to attend these meetings. Right now meetings are not mandatory, they are optional! This way everyone is informed and safety regulations will be consistant. Grade level teachers will be able to meet and come up with plans that can be implemented and reasonable for all concerned.

Thank you,

Rachel Furutani

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

In support of continue funding shortage differentials.

thesandpebbles HURST <thesandpebbles@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:36 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Honorable members of the board,
I'm writing in support of a continuation of funding of shortage area differentials. As a recruited SpEd teacher from the Felix Consent era, I know of no other. Due to SpEd teacher shortages I was the care coordinator for 23 SpEd students last year, responsible for IEP/Re-evaluations in addition to teaching two 7th grade ELA inclusion classes and two 8th grade ELA inclusion classes. This is not a sustainable model. I wrote a letter to then Complex Area Superintendent Bill Arakaki with concerns about my ability to provide fidelity and efficacy of SpEd services without reply.

Empirical data indicates that the SpEd differential was the most significant effort HIDOE/BOE has taken to provide credentialed instruction to students with disabilities in my 24yrs of service with HIDOE.

To be clear Hawaii's public schools are in crisis. Without a continuation of the differential, there is no longer an incentive for me to not retire early. I also have serious ethical concerns about a decision to discontinue differentials after DOE employees transferred into positions based upon receiving the bonus.

The economic pressures brought on due the COVID-19 impacts need to be considered in the context of costs resulting from the Felix Consent Decree. Without improvements in providing credentialed instruction to children with disabilities, the State of Hawaii will undoubtably be facing similar charges. With this said, I respectfully ask that funding of shortage area differentials be considered a priority and continue.

Thank you for your due diligence in exploring all possible funding options prior a decision to discontinue. At its core, a decision to discontinue differentials will impact children of Hawaii for decades to come. Please vote for a continuation of funding shortage differentials.

Mahalo,

Howard Hurst, M.S.Ed

Gmail

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

Testimony: Teacher shortage differentials

Kaluhikauahemakanamaikalani Kaapana <kaapana8@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kaluhi Ka‘apana and I am a new teacher that will be teaching at a Hawaiian immersion school on O‘ahu. I am writing to urge you, the Board of Education, to continue funding for all teacher shortage differentials. Hawaiian immersion teachers, special education teachers, and teachers in hard to staff areas go above and beyond to give our students the best education they can get with whatever we are given. Often times, this includes buying supplies with our own money. I know that personally, for Hawaiian immersion teachers, we put a lot of time and effort--usually unpaid hours--into creating resources to support our families and student learning. I urge you to continue funding to compensate these teachers for all their time and effort that they put into giving our keiki the education they deserve, especially in a time such as this.

Mahalo,
Kaluhi Ka‘apana

Gmail

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

Shortage differentials funding

Laura Barbato <lbarbato@kamaile.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha e BOE,

I cannot urge you enough to reject the proposal to halt the shortage differentials to teachers. As a struggling teacher on the Leeward coast, I have relied on these monies to finally make a manageable living here in Hawaii. We were set to leave Waianae after 12 years solely based on money when these came into effect. It was such a relief after so many years of struggling.

Distance learning has not only been challenging, but it has taken much more time than I thought to be successful. Students have been responsive with extra communication, but I know with a decrease in pay, the motivation will just not be there. You will see an enormous number of teachers leave the state and leave us with yet an even bigger teacher shortage.

Think of when you were trying to teach your own children this past spring semester. Did you ever wonder, "How do the teachers do this??" Don't you think we deserve to keep receiving the compensation you have already granted?

Mahalo for your time and all you do,
Laura Barbato, Special Education Teacher, Kamaile Academy PCS

ʻAha Kauleo
STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR KA PAPAHANA KAIAPUNI

July 23, 2020

Board of Education, General Business Meeting

VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha e ka Papa Hoʻonaʻauao (BOE),

The ʻAha Kauleo, is a council of parents, teachers and administrators of Kaiapuni or Hawaiian language immersion schools across the state. We advocate for increased and improved support of Kaiapuni schools and work closely with our school communities, the State Department of Education through the Office of Hawaiian Education, the Board of Education and the University of Hawaiʻi through its Hawaiian language and studies programs.

We, the ʻAha Hoʻokō (ʻAha Kauleo Board), **oppose** the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year and urge the BOE to **reject** the proposal. Last December, we testified in support of the Hawaiʻi Department of Education's proposal to the BOE to provide an annual shortage differential of $8,000 per each qualified and licensed Hawaiian language immersion classroom teacher, which we know has bolstered this critical, teacher shortage area. Furthermore, while we recognize that there are currently eighteen (18) Department operated Hawaiian language immersion programs, we also recognize and continue to advocate for the inclusion of qualifying classroom teachers from the additional six (6) Hawaiian language immersion public charter schools.

We acknowledge that throughout Hawaiʻi, we are all experiencing many extraordinary challenges due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which certainly includes financial and budgetary impacts. Nevertheless, we advocate in favor of the Hawaiʻi Department of Education (HIDOE) and the BOE honoring their commitment to all qualified and licensed teachers in the shortage differential category of Hawaiian language immersion. Our kumu are being asked to continue their most honorable work in these extraordinary times and they deserve the full annual shortage differential that they have earned.

Me ka ʻoiaʻio,

Kamoaʻe Walk
ʻAha Hoʻokō (Executive Board)
ʻAha Kauleo

Membership *Nā Kula Kaiapuni o Ānuenue, Hauʻula, Kualapuʻu, Maui ma Pāʻia, Maui ma Kalama, Maui ma Kekaulike, Nawahīokalaniʻōpuʻu, Nahīʻenaʻena, Nānākuli, Pūʻōhala, Waiau, Ke Kula ʻO ʻEhunuikaimalino, Ke Kula ʻO Samuel M. Kamakau, Ka ʻUmeke Kāʻeo, ʻO Hina I Ka Mālama, ʻAha Pūnana Leo, Brigham Young University, Hawaiʻi, Hale Kuamoʻo, Hawaiʻi Department of Education, Kamehameha Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo-Ka Haka ʻUla o Keʻelikōlani, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa-Hawaiʻinuiākea &University of Hawaiʻi Maui College-E Hoʻoulu Lāhui*

Gmail

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

Testimony

Katie and Reid Childress <krchildress17@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.
My name is Kathryn Childress. I work at Jeffferson Elementary in Honolulu as a special education teacher.
I moved to Ohau from Texas last year. I have felt honored to be able to serve this incredible community as a teacher. I have learned so much about the community, traditions, history, and culture of this area. I love being able to teach here and grow as an educator here. I have many hours of trainings and experience from districts in Texas that I can bring to my school in Honolulu.
Although, with the cost of living and the low teacher salary I am worried I will not be able to continue living and working here for many more years. I am spending so much of my own paycheck money on my classroom here and with the general cost of living the low paycheck is worrisome. The differential sent a message that you value my position and that the direction of the HIDOE had their sights set on realistic improvement to getting quality teachers.
Taking this differential away shows all teachers that you do not value them first when times get hard. It sends a message that you can do this without us. My classroom is full of beautiful students who have very intense needs, some with autism, and some who will never be able to verbally advocate for themselves. I want to stay here and advocate for them and bring my other experience here.
Without the differential I am not sure I can stay on this island and teach for years to come.
Thank you for your time.
Katie Childress

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Johnalyn - Pua Sablan-Lee <jsablanlee@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Johnalyn (Pua) Sablan-Lee, my son Kaleb-Justice Kalunakānāwai attends Kauapuni Pūʻōhala. It saddens us to hear that his Kumu may not be compensated as they should be for their unique qualifications to teach ʻŌlelo Hawaii.

Our son is the youngest in our ʻOhana and through his Hawaiian Education we have all been impacted in a way that has reset our desire to Honor and Protect Hawaiian Language. His education in Hawaiian Language is already limited as there are not many Schools whom offer Hawaiian Immersion Learning.

Should Hawaiian Immersion Kumu not be compensated accordingly; our sons education will be negatively impacted.

My email is to testify on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Please do what is RIGHT and compensate our Hawaiian Immersion Kumu.

A hui hou,
Johnalyn (Pua) Sablan-Lee
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Amy Naehu <amynaehu@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Amy Naehu, and I am a special education teacher at Pearl City High School. The recent pay differential has helped me to remain a special education teacher. Prior to the differential, I was searching online weekly for a new career. As much as I loved teaching and my students, I could not afford to support my family on a Hawaii teacher's salary. I was even considering moving to the mainland to continue my passion for teaching. When the differentials were given, I stopped looking for a new career. The extra compensation helps pay bills and support the needs of my family. I am finally able to plan for a future in Hawaii, the place I was born and raised.

I understand the impact COVID-19 is having on our state and education system. As a special education teacher, I did not shy away but rose to the challenge to provide learning opportunities and access to resources/education to all my students. I contacted parents daily and maintained a detailed contact log, per DOE request. Many SPED teachers were forced to adapt and go on teaching and providing special education services under little training and unclear direction. Still, I never threw in the towel and made every effort to connect with my students and their families in order to meet their needs. As we enter unprecedented times, I will continue to rise to every obstacle because I'm a special education teacher and will go above and beyond to provide my students with the best educational experience possible. I've taken numerous professional development courses, collaborated with other teachers, met with parents and outside agencies, spent countless hours online searching for teaching methods and ideas, and will continue to do so as it is necessary for my students' future.

Temporarily discontinuing the extra compensation will negatively impact our keiki in so many ways. I will be forced to search for a new career, and I am certain other teachers will need to do the same. Our students will not have licensed special education teachers, and classrooms will be filled with emergency hires and/or unqualified individuals. I've been teaching in my content area for many years, and students benefit from my expertise and knowledge of the subject area. In addition, I purchase supplies with my own money for my students, so they can have every resource available and won't feel ashamed about not bringing their supplies. The pay differential allows me to do so. Also, the temporary discontinuance will affect teachers who choose to remain teaching as it will put more students in their classrooms and on their caseloads. They will become exhausted and possibly rethink their career choice as well.

I love Hawaii and want to continue educating our keiki to ensure they become contributing members to our state. Our kids love when their teachers are from the islands because they can connect with them culturally. It creates a special bond, and with that bond, students are open to learning and see the value in education. They see a teacher from Oahu overcome every challenge to reach her goals and realize their dreams can come true too.

Thank you for your time,
--Amy Naehu

Gmail

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

Do Not Cut Teacher Differentials

Brenda Palumbo <brenda.palumbo@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:13 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE:

I have heard rumors that our pay differentials might be cut this year. Please, NO! I teach on Lana'i. The cost of living in Hawaii is high but the cost of living on Lana'i is so high I feel like I live on the top of Everest. With only one gas station and virtually only one grocery store we are at the mercy of the store owners. The pay differential is the only thing that is keeping me on Lana'i as it does mitigate some of the expenses.
We are short teachers on our lovely island as it is, dropping the differential is going to put our students in an even more strained learning environment.
Please do everything in your power not to cut our pay or the pay differentials. We are barely keeping our heads afloat as it is.
Mahalo

Brenda Palumbo
LHES ELL Teacher

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

Concern for Differential Reduction

Jason Shrable <20069069@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:13 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Hello,

My name is Jason Shrable and I am a teacher at Kealakehe High School. This will be my 6th year teaching in Hawaii. I recently heard that the Differential for Special Education and Hard to Staff Locations will be removed. I wanted to express my concerns regarding this.

My wife and I are both teachers who have two boys. We recently bought a house for $416,000 last year. The house was sold to us by people we know personally. They gave us an amazing deal on the home. However, even with both of our incomes and the price they sold it to us, we had to open a portion of the home to Airbnb to make things meet. I also want to let you know that I recently graduated with my Doctorate in Special Education. So including this pay raise, I still worried about our finances.

When the differentials were announced last year, I was very excited and expressed to my wife the desire to continue living here. The past several months have been a huge blessing. We were able to begin saving additional money towards our retirement and I upgraded my 2003 Ford Ranger to a 2018 Tacoma (our plan was to upgrade my wife's 2001 4Runner to something newer later on in the year). However, with the news of my differential being taken away and the inevitable furlough going to happen in the near future, I am uncertain of our ability to stay in Hawaii. This includes our Airbnb, which is functioning at 30% occupancy from a 100% occupancy before the Coronavirus outbreak.

What infuriates me is that this information was just recently released 1 ½ weeks before teachers are expected to report back to school (it's not like we didn't know that Hawaii's economy is plummeting). For a state that promotes "Aloha" I am saddened by this approach to informing its employees that they will not be receiving addition financial support that so many of us rely upon.

I hope that you reconsider dismissing the differentials. If not, I know of several other states that support their teachers and are more than happy to hire educators who are specialized in their field.

Mahalo,

Jason Shrable

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

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Teacher Differentials

Elizabeth Garfin <elizabeth.garfin@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I understand that budgets are tight right now, but cutting teacher differentials is not the way to go. Currently, I make $2800 a month. I used to have a second job as a server and made an additional (and needed) $1600 a month, but I lost that job due to Covid. So far, I have already taken a 33% pay cut just by losing my second job.

Over the past 17 weeks, I have already lost $4800 from not being able to work my second job and have dipped heavily into my savings. If another $5000 is taken away from me due to the differentials, I don't know where that money will possibly be coming from. I will have to go into debt.

Additionally, if the 20% paycuts go into effect (after I have already lost 33% of my income from my restaurant job), I will have to leave Hawaii. How can anyone handle a 50% paycuts in Hawaii and survive?

Please, reevaluate the notion of cutting teacher pay in any format: differentials or pay cut of state employees. I cannot afford any more paycuts. Most teachers have lost their second or third jobs because of Covid. We can't afford an attack on our primary income as well

Thanks for your time,
Elizabeth Smith
5th grade teacher on Maui

Gmail

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

Testimony

Tina Myers <btmyers25@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:22 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Board of Education members,

I am submitting my testimony on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Please reject the proposal to stop the teacher shortage differentials.

As a fully self contained special education teacher, I have been able to use the differential to help provide more activities and resources to my students. We need to work in close physical proximity to support my students' needs; the shortage differential is what help me decide to stay in special education for this school year.

Thank you,
Tina Marie Myers

Gmail

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

Shortage differential testimony

Virginia Wendehorst <vje1129@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:33 PM
To: "Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

When I moved to Hawaii and continued teaching, I took more than a $10,000 pay cut Despite the years of teaching experience and years of Educational Assistant Experience I came with. AND yet my rent on Oahu tripled from my living cost on the mainland! Special education teachers choose to teach because we love our students and that is evident by our loyalty to our students and returning every year, despite the overtime work that piles on, and the pressure and legal responsibilities in our role. We are not martyrs to the community and deserve to be paid an income to cover basic living needs such as food and housing. Another pay-cut will affect my basic living needs and childcare needs and Will be devastating for my family. I love teaching and I love my students and school, please reconsider this pay-cut for special education teacher retention!

Virginia Ellison-Wendehorst

Special Education and Hard to Staff

Jennifer Kaaikala <jennifer.kaaikala@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:34 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a long time special education teacher on Lanai, I have wanted to leave special education many times through the years. There is a high burn out rate in special education. The differential was a factor in remaining in sped . I am dual certified and have options other than special ed. I love my students but the time I spend doing the paperwork such as writing IEP's is overwhelming and has been uncompensated for years. I imagine at times what it would be like to teach and not spend every break working on IEP's, but instead planning for my classes. It sounds almost dreamy. As sped teachers we still teach and plan just as our co teachers, but aslo write documents, monitor students, work with specialists for behavior, etc. There are so many more responsibilities that come with the territory of teaching sped. For years if we asked for relief we were told, you chose sped, this is part of your job.

Another issue is the mentoring of new sped teachers. They attend a training but one training does not work especially for entering an IEP in ECSSS. I have been mentoring for years out of the kindness of my heart because it benefits our students. I spend a whole year working with a new teacher then they leave. I start again the next year with their replacement , then they leave. The turnover is burning us out as mentors. This past year, I refused to mentor as I have been doing so for 20 years already. It doesn't end with the turnover in special education

Jennifer Kaaikala

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

Testimony Action Item G

Daina Collins <daina@paia.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education, State of Hawaii:

I am a k-3 Special Education teacher at Paia Elementary school on Maui. The cut in my salary this summer, and the proposed salary cut for the 2020-2021 school year, is making it difficult for me to continue teaching in Hawaii.

My colleagues and I are already putting our physical health and emotional well-being at stake by returning to school during this pandemic. And then for the Board of Education to not support us by cutting our salaries proves that the board believes that teachers are expendable and not valued members of the education community. That is a sad, and ironic, commentary of how little the Board of Education thinks of its teachers and education in Hawaii.

The Board of Education's perceived indifference to education is all the more pronounced since the money for salary differentials was voted on, agreed to, and earmarked, last year. Additionally, the CARES Act and upcoming HEROES Act will provide federal stimulus monies for education that could be used.

If you are looking for people to babysit, I'm sure there are minimum wage earners that would gladly step in to help you out. But if you are looking for educators--professionals with degrees, experience, credentials/licensure; educators that are experts in federal IDEA guidelines, Hawaiian language acquisition, and insuring equal educational opportunities to all of Hawaii's public school children, regardless of where in the islands they live, you will not defer or discontinue teacher salary differentials for the 2020-2021 school year.

I look forward to your support and your vote to continue the salary differential that you promised to teachers last year.

Daina Collins

Teacher concerns for opening

daniel mclaughlin <danisensei@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:43 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education
I am a Special Ed Teacher at Roosevelt High School. This is my 19th year of teaching.

I suggest the most prudent option for reopening is to do it completely online.
It makes no sense to open schools while infections are increasing in Hawaii and exploding across the mainland. We should have always been planning and training for the online option. After there are no infections for 14 days, move to a hybrid/ blended learning plan. If infections remain negligible, consider returning to normal with precautions.

Can you imagine what would happen if just one student or teacher is positive? Can you imagine the consequences if just one teacher or student dies because they were infected at a DOE facility?

We have the technology to go completely online. Some of us need more training to integrate teaching strategies with web-platforms. We have squandered a lot of time, from the end of the 3rd quarter in March until now; time that we could have used for training. I suggest moving back the school start date to allow preparations to allow this training.

Teaching online offers students, who feel safer staying at home, the option of getting their actual teachers delivering their curriculum. Teaching online offers Teachers who feel safer teaching from home the ability to offer the same curriculum equitably to all students.

I hope you will take into consideration, not just the safety of the students, but also the safety of the teachers and staff. Recently, in Florida, they found that a third of kids tested for corona virus tested positive. It is true that young people can recover more quickly, but they could easily pass the infection to their teachers; many of whom are older and in a high-risk category.

I urge that you consider taking the safest path toward reopening, which is to start out completely online.
Mahalo,
Dan McLaughlin

1410 Hoa Koa Place
Honolulu, Hi 96821

808 782 7408

Gmail

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

differential on hard to staff

Jennifer Kaaikala <jennifer.kaaikala@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:44 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Imagine a teacher on oahu needing to get a CT scan. They can schedule it for the afternoon and go right after work and only use gas as an expense to get there and not use a sick day.

Lanai is very different. Not only do we have the expense of air fare to get a CT scan, we also have to get a hotel, due to limited flights, and rent a car or uber. To top it off we have to take the whole day off so we lose a sick leave day. This is an extra expense of living on Lanai. This is why people do not want to come.

Imagine if you want to buy groceries on Oahu. Things are much cheaper there. For Lanai we have the extra cost of one more barge delivery added to our total. If we want to buy cheaper groceries or have the options teachers on the larger islands have, then we can pay for a boat ferry of 50 each, then a car rental to shop on Maui.

Living on Lanai is very expensive and why would teachers want to do that if you are not from here and have no local ties. It is hard.

Also new teachers come in to teacher cottages. They are ghetto. No furniture, or nasty furniture. cabinets are crumbling. Things are not clean. New teachers now have to think about how to get furniture here. It is not as simple as heading to a furniture store, ordering , and having delivered. It is fly to Oahu or Maui to order, then having it sent to the barge. From our end, we have to arrange and pay Pulama big bucks for delivery or know someone with a truck who is willing to help us pick it up at YB. new teachers do not know people with trucks yet.

The list goes on as we haven't even gotten to gas prices here.

Thank you, Jennifer Kaaikala

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Testimony

Kevin Peters <kepeters@kamaile.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

We are at a tipping point in Hawaii as far as holding onto our great Sped. Teachers. By possibly removing this differential we would see a lot of teachers leave this state in droves. Please, please reconsider this option.

--

Kevin Peters
Success Coach
Kamaile Academy

Gmail

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

Pay Differential

Debbie Matthews <debbiejomatthews@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I understand the reasoning behind the move to delay or dismantle the pay differentials for teachers. The pandemic is affecting everyone, and funding sources are being strained. That being said, the funding was designed to keep teachers in the profession to provide a quality education for our children.

The demands of delivering education in a variety of innovative ways have increased dramatically, requiring additional learning coupled with experienced teaching knowledge. It seems counter productive to lose qualified professionals through the pay cut which would keep them from supporting their families. This action, if taken, may increase the number of individuals seeking financial aide rather than contributing to the State funds in. In the long term, it impacts the education our keiki need to become independent, contributing members of our lively society.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. We are desperately looking to you for help.

Gmail

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

Differential pay cuts

Tricia shillingford <mstrish217@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Patricia Shillingford. I have been a teacher in KKP complex on the Big Island for 16 years. We are and always have been a hard to fill school. We work with the highest number of socio-economically disadvantaged families in the state. Right now- we are being asked to go back to school- with no real “plan” and safety precautions that are sketchy to say the least. Teachers are writing their wills in anticipation of going back to work and now DOE wants to take our bonus away? As it is we spend from our own paychecks much, much more than we can deduct from our taxes. Many of us have spouses who are not able to work right now. Despite all good intentions of filing for unemployment- many have not received a dime... Yet, the DOE still wants to take this from us?

Please.. you know it’s wrong. You know it’s not fair- you are concerned about the lack of leadership the DOE has shown lately. Please stand up for your teachers.

Thank You,
Patricia Shillingford

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Saofai Lowe <saofailowe@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 1:15 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!
I know these are hard times for everyone and I thank you for working tirelessly to find solutions to complex problems in our state. Thank you for listening to concerns from teachers and the community about decisions and promises that affect our work and keiki. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Saofai Lowe, a teacher at Waianae High School; my child also attends this school. With data showing more educators are transitioning into hard to staff schools and SpEd teaching positions for SY2020-2021 resulting in the retention of our teachers to help our most needy population of kids, why would DOE go back on its promise to continue to fund teacher shortage differentials? Why is it that teacher pay and incentives are the first to be considered cutting whenever there are financial concerns?

As a parent, I do not support having a sub in my child's classroom every other day because there is no qualified teacher. DOE believes in preparing students to be college and career ready. Cutting teacher incentives that keep teachers in hard to staff schools and serve the vulnerable population of kids will not help achieve this vision. Who will teach the children? Teachers feel valued and want to remain at their jobs when you keep your promises on their incentives. The pride in the Talk Story with Dr. K every week is palpable; it highlights the work of teachers and students, yet when it comes time for financial decisions, those same people that DOE takes pride in become an unimportant part of the discussion. Teachers and keiki are at the frontline working in the trenches. In a few days, we are going back to school even while Covid-19 is still raging not knowing how all of our health and well-being are going to be affected. For all these, please continue funding for teacher shortage differentials.

Mahalo nui loa!
Saofai Lowe

Testimony on Action Item VI. H.

Anonymous Testimony <anonymoustestimony411@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 1:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Name: Anonymous
Title: Classroom Teacher at HIDOE Middle School
Agenda Item: VI. H.
Position: Comment

Dear Board Members:

While I wish to remain anonymous, I do attest that I am a classroom teacher in a Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) middle school and that I have a child who is enrolled in a HIDOE elementary school. I am scared for my family, my school, my community, and Hawai'i if we return to in-person schooling on August 4. Through this testimony I join the thousands of public school teachers and parents pleading for a safe reopening of schools. For schools to safely reopen in-person we need: 1. Schools and teachers to be prepared (we are not); 2. A public health campaign to help families prepare their children for the new normal at school (this has not happened); and 3. A robust testing and contact tracing infrastructure in place (it is not).

At the July 16, 2020 Special Committee on Covid-19 Informational Briefing (the "briefing"), HIDOE Superintendent Kishimoto opened by stating 83% of parents want their children back in school [in-person]. The issue with this data is it was taken from the Panorama Distance Learning Survey which was conducted June 8-30, before the surge in Covid-19 cases on the mainland and the spike on Oahu (including the 6-year-old at Kama'aina Kids, this case hit me particularly hard as my little girl typically attends Kama'aina Kids at her school). I do not have any hard data, I wish I did, but I can attest my sampling of comments across social media and in discussions with fellow parents indicates the mood among Hawai'i's parents has changed. New reports documenting children contract Covid more readily than previously thought (⅓ of those tested in Florida) and that children may develop multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) and other complications (including neurological disorders), potentially impacting health across their lifetime (think chickenpox and shingles but with the later manifestations unknown and potentially far worse), has majorly shifted the thinking on in-person school among parents.

Superintendent Kishimoto also stated during the briefing that only 15-16% of parents want a fully distance learning option. This percentage makes sense given the dissatisfaction parents reported on the Panorama survey around the quality of distance learning received in Quarter 4 of the 2019-2020 school year. However, the quality of distance learning in Quarter 4 should not drive decisions about distance learning in general. Quarter 4 distance learning was put together virtually overnight, teachers had little or no professional development, schools did not have adequate online platforms or tools in place, not all schools loaned out laptops, not all schools looked into mobile hotspots, there was no attendance or grading (necessary for equity but removes extrinsic motivation), and let's not forget, everyone was in shock and scrambling to understand the pandemic. Hawai'i's teachers can deliver quality distance learning. Just since the midpoint of July we've seen school district after school district on the mainland opt for distance learning in the fall in what Education Week has described as a rising wave of districts sticking with full-time remote learning. It is agreed by our own Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) that distance learning is the safest possible option.

It is also worth noting that many parents are not aware that Hawai'i Child Care Connections has relaxed their qualifying requirements for childcare subsidies. I think many parents who are pushing for in-person school are doing so not because they feel it is the safest, but because they feel pressure to return to work and need a safe place for their children to be while they are at work. If they knew about these other options to keep their keiki healthy and had assistance applying for subsidies and connecting with providers they would likely prefer a distance learning option.

Schools have been known colloquially as "germ factories" for as long as I can remember, and for good reason. Students spend nearly as much of their day in school as adults do in a full time job, yet unlike most adults, students are in close contact with each other in a single enclosed space (classroom) all day which has historically resulted in the large scale transmission of seasonal flu and common colds. At the briefing, Dr. Sarah Park, Hawai'i State Epidemiologist, made a lot of 'ohana bubbles as key to protecting everyone. As a middle school teacher I will be in contact with around two-hundred students a week and my students will be switching classrooms and teachers each period (hour). A new study out of South Korea published the day of the briefing (July 16, 2020) and summarized in the New York Times found older children (age 10-19) are even *more likely to spread Covid-19 than adults*. Though it is unclear why, it may be because "older children are frequently as big as adults, and yet may have some of the same unhygienic habits as young children do." Dr. Ashish Jha, Director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, claims this study is "one of the best studies we've had to date on this issue" because it was "very carefully done, it's systematic and looks at a very large population." Dr. Bruce Anderson, Director of Hawai'i DOH, conceded at the briefing he anticipates there will be cases when we reopen schools for in-person learning. This study confirms his position as "the findings suggest that as schools reopen, communities will see clusters of infection take root that include children of all ages." Several experts who commented on the study to the New York Times also cautioned about this outcome.

And it is not just middle and high school students who will get sick and transmit Covid, younger children are susceptible as well. Because most schools were swift to switch to distance learning in March, children had been sequestered in their homes during the spring. Over the summer as businesses started to reopen and parents went back to work, we have seen that children are not as safe as we may have previously thought. In fact, it may have been the isolation of children which helped this common interpretation take root. Now we have seen 1,700 cases of children with Covid-19 in Texas daycares, and the number of children under ten with Covid in Oregon grow fivefold to nearly as many cases as people over eighty, and 85 infants under the age of one test positive in a single Texas county.

Epidemiologists concur we will see Covid transmission in schools if we open for in-person learning. Think of the Hawaiian Airlines and Oahu Covid clusters in the context of schools. In these cases one person attended a Hawaiian Airlines training and consequently got twenty-four more Hawaiian Airlines employees sick. Then this same individual visited two gyms on Oahu and got another twenty people sick. What if this one person were a student at a middle school? What if this student got many students sick at their school, and then went home and got their elementary aged sibling sick, and then the elementary aged student took Covid to their school? This scenario is a very real possibility.

This eventuality warrants a robust readiness to respond and contain an outbreak and prevent any "super spreader events" or infection "clusters." I do not believe there is a sufficient plan in place for if a student, teacher, or staff member tests positive for Covid-19. Do we have enough testing kits and reagents? Our testing capacity has been cut in half since early July due to mainland demand for tests. Do we have enough contract tracers trained and hired? Lieutenant Governor Josh Green, M.D., recently (July 19) remarked he is skeptical we have enough contract tracers to handle a surge in cases. Will any substitute teachers (many of whom are retired teachers) be willing to cover at a school when necessarily the whole reason they've been asked to fill in is a teacher has been exposed to Covid-19? (Common sense and my reading of vast

comments by local substitute teachers on social media threads indicates no). And what happens in the middle and high school contexts when someone tests positive? Dr. Park said in the elementary context only the "'ohana bubble" (presumably meaning one elementary teacher and their students) would immediately transition to distance learning, but how does this work in the middle and high school grades? These students and teachers will have come in contact with hundreds of classmates/students in any given week. Does the entire school switch to distance learning overnight? If we anticipate there will be cases, which we do, why put ourselves, again, in the position of scrambling AND this time *having knowingly risked the health of everyone on campus*? This, to me, seems unconscionable.

As for taking precautions in the classroom, I have been told personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer, and Clorox wipes have been ordered for my school but they are coming on pallets which won't arrive until September. I am lucky, I put out a call on my Facebook page and crowdsourced these items for my classroom. Not all teachers will be able to do the same and not all teachers can afford to buy their own and wait for a reimbursement. And, at the same time we have inadequate numbers of tests, contract tracers, PPE, and substitute teachers, a recent study found we also have some of the lowest capacity in the nation when it comes to hospital beds. I am scared for my students and afraid of what I will take home to my family, particularly my mother who is sixty-three, disabled, with diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

I understand from Superintendent Kishimoto's remarks at the briefing that HIDOE views reopening schools as building on summer school, but most teachers do not teach summer school. This feels like something completely new for us. Superintendent Kishimoto also said at the briefing that summer school participants were of the opinion we should go back to school. I don't know how many parents and teachers took this summer school survey, but it does not speak for all parents and teachers, nor was the experience of summer school participants even close to reflective of what school looks or operates like with a typical student population (or even a ½ or ¼ of the typical population).

I also understand schools are important to the economy, but health needs to come first. In addition, in a review of the models different schools are using it appears the average number of days students who opt for in-person learning will spend on campus is only 2 days a week. Is the relief of "childcare" 2 days a week really worth the risk of infecting many students, staff, and faculty (and their families by extension)? I don't think so. Perhaps you're not convinced 2 days a week of in-person learning is worth the risk from a "childcare" perspective but you still think it is worth it from a best educational practices and social-emotional learning (SEL) perspective. I would agree with this if in-person learning was able to be done as it used to be, but it can't be. In-person schooling will now include face masks and social distancing and health screenings and temperature scans and staggered dismissals, and it won't include high fives or hugs or group work or coming within 6 feet of friends during lunch or recess.

In fact, while the original impetus for school reopening was an economic one, plans to open schools in-person following normal start dates picked up steam after the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released a statement calling for consideration of the social wellbeing of students and indicating the potential exposure to Covid may be outweighed by the negative social impacts of continued isolation. Proponents of in-person school reopenings took the AAP's measured statement and treated it as a proclamation by America's pediatricians that schools should open in-person in the fall no matter the circumstances. The AAP has since walked back their original position with an emphatic statement that "science and community circumstances must guide decision-making." Are we really willing to risk the health and safety of our communities for this version of in-person school a couple of days a week? Unfortunately, the procedures we must follow to protect our health also happen to negate the social-emotional and academic benefits of in-person school. In fact, opening schools in-person may be more damaging to students under current conditions. Sending students back to in-person schools when we cannot yet reasonably guarantee their

safety may cause them great emotional harm. As Jen Alexander, author and trauma-informed schools expert points out, “if we care about health, including mental health, we must do everything we can to help ensure their safety first. I’m discouraged by a lack of understanding regarding this foundational concept.”

In terms of what Dr. Park referred to at the briefing as the “personal responsibility” of parents to screen their children’s health before dropping them off at school, I think we can see where this could go wrong. I used to run daycare and I know that well intentioned parents who don’t have sick or family leave still drop off their sick kids. Tylenol can be used to bring down fever long enough to get past screening.

In informal discussions with teachers and administrators most seem to believe there will be cases of Covid at school that will return us to distance learning anyways. If we start out in a distance learning model we can get teachers the training we need to be effective distance educators and prevent any family from having to find out their child contracted Covid-19 at school. I won’t even get into liability here as who knows what legal precedents will be set over ill advised school reopenings. There are districts requiring parents to sign liability waivers before their children participate in school athletics. I suppose this makes sense as we have already seen a football coach at ‘Iolani school test positive for Covid-19. I am also curious, what do HIDOE and DOH consider an acceptable number of infected students before distance learning is triggered? Would distance learning be triggered by a single preventable death?

I also heard quite a bit at the briefing about the number of training opportunities there have been for teachers this summer. I am likely not aware of all opportunities as I changed positions within HIDOE over the summer, but I received my first invitation for professional development just last week (on distance learning, not Covid safety protocols). It should also be noted that any of this training is on a teacher’s own time, that said, we are still willing to do it to be prepared for our students and families. As of now I am being asked to prepare in-person lessons, asynchronous online lessons, and synchronous online lessons. Each of these delivery types is very different and each requires a different preparation and guidance. I will be spread too thin to be effective in any of the modes. I hate being ineffective, especially when it comes to my students.

As a teacher at a Title I school, one of my key concerns has always been equity. Distance learning can be more difficult for low income students to access and succeed at, but much of this inequity can be alleviated immediately, though not all, which is also true of in-person schooling. As to computers and the internet, many schools are already 1:1 with devices that can be loaned out to students and the flexible CARES Act funding secured by HIDOE can be used to purchase more devices and internet hotspots for more rural locations. Both Spectrum and Hawaiian Telcom have offered free internet for families with students. Others have pointed to inequities around mental health care and help with distance learning during the day when parents are at work. CARES Act funding can also be used for student mental health services. Hawai‘i Child Care Connections has already relaxed its qualifying requirements so more families with school-aged children can get subsidies for their children to be cared for by family members or by non-family members in the child’s home. More needs to be done to make people aware of this opportunity. Aside from friends and family, another good option could be using Child Care Connections subsidies to pay local college students to go into homes to care for keiki and tutor them through their distance learning assignments (all providers must pass a background check). Many college students are doing all online classes now and would probably like to earn some extra money. The point is, there are solutions which keep us all safe if we get creative and come together as a community.

Yes, this is a challenging time for all of us, but it is not a time to bury our heads in the sand and pretend that attempting to go back to normal will make things normal. We need solutions like those I’ve suggested concerning CARES Act funded technology and mental health care and child care subsidies, and many more ideas we can come up with if we come together as a community. Covid will not dictate our lives forever, this

is temporary. This is a critical time to get things right and we don't get things right when we rush. I haven't talked to a single teacher who feels ready. And while many teachers, myself included, have spent many hours over the summer attending meetings and self-educating on Covid protocols and distance learning best practices, our 2020-21 contracts do not even start until July 29. Can anyone honestly tell me that we will be ready to safely welcome students back in-person four days after returning to work?

It is also worth noting that Hawai'i had two confirmed cases of Covid-19 on March 13 (the last day students were on campus for in-person learning) and today (July 20) we have 1,393 confirmed cases. I wonder how many we'll have by August 4?

Science should guide school reopenings. Many agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (APA), the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, and every state except Kansas have released school reopening guidance. There is a growing consensus on a few best practices across most of these reports, such as the importance of masking and social distancing.

While I prefer we take a wait and see approach with Covid numbers going up in Hawai'i, I also appreciate we are always going to have to live with a certain amount of risk. That said, I believe three major initiatives need to happen before we are ready for an in-person return to schools. One, we need to make sure schools and teachers are ready. Two, we need a public health campaign to help families prepare their students for school in the Covid era. And three, we need an adequate testing and contact tracing infrastructure. School readiness means having adequate supplies of PPE, hand sanitizer, and cleaning supplies. It also means establishing consistent policy and protocols around mask-wearing and social distancing. I think there should be a HIDOE-wide policy that masks are required at all times for students in grades 3-12, with exceptions for students with special needs or a medical condition which is exacerbated by mask wearing. There would also need to be an exception while students are eating lunch, socially distanced.

Exceptions to mask wearing should be documented, not left to the discretion of parents who have a personal or political issue with mask wearing. There is misinformation about mask wearing decreasing oxygen saturation, this has been debunked but not all community members have access to the accurate science on mask wearing. For most children mask wearing is merely an inconvenience. Teachers who are over sixty, pregnant, or who have underlying health conditions should be matched with classes where students can wear masks and younger, healthier teachers should teach the students who are unable to wear masks. In addition to a mask wearing policy, there needs to be articulated protocols. Protocols both for appropriate mask wearing (covering nose and mouth) and what to do if a student refuses to wear a mask or wear it appropriately. If policy or protocols are inconsistent from one classroom to the next the efficacy of mask wearing is far less and the teachers who attempt to enforce mask wearing run into a classroom management nightmare if students have gotten away with not wearing a mask or not wearing it correctly in another class. This is too important to leave unaddressed.

The second initiative I see as vital is a major public health awareness campaign around the efficacy and necessity of masks and social distancing to help families prepare their children for the new school environment. We know the three best ways to prevent Covid transmission are (1) hand washing or sanitizing, (2) social distancing, and (3) mask wearing. While most everyone has bought into the idea of hand washing or sanitizing, many communities are not getting accurate information about how effective social distancing and mask wearing are in combating Covid-19. This is not surprising, historically hand washing was also controversial, unti major public health messaging bought enough time for people to see disease rates go down due to widespread handwashing. In addition to providing information on social distancing and mask wearing, we should encourage parents to practice proper mask wearing with their keiki and we should use CARES Act funding to provide families in need with masks that are comfortable and

child-size. We should also consider fabrics which provide coverage but are breathable. Many HIDOE classrooms do not have air conditioning, mine included. An August afternoon gets uncomfortably hot under normal circumstances, six hours into mask wearing I can imagine irritable students with beads of sweat on their faces will have difficulty complying with appropriate mask wearing. Perhaps there should also be a protocol for allowing temporary relief from a mask outside of the classroom. The public health messaging could also include information about childcare subsidies for students who are not in the vulnerable category targeted for initial return to in-person schooling or for parents who still feel safest with distance learning.

The decision for students to wear face masks should not be the decision or responsibility of individual classroom teachers. Inconsistency in understanding and enforcement of these interventions will lead to unnecessary Covid transmission. I can assure you, teachers do not feel prepared or supported when it comes to enforcing these interventions. Families also need to receive education on the danger they put their entire school community in if they send a child who is sick to school. We need to create isolation options either on campus or at another site for the symptomatic students of essential workers and health care workers (or even just parents without paid sick leave) so they do not feel compelled to send their children to school when they are sick.

To those who have heard if stores can be open schools can be open, this analogy has several flaws. For one, stores are private companies that can turn away someone not wearing a mask or force a customer to leave if they take off their mask while shopping. Obviously, schools do not have this discretion, nor would they want to turn away students. A typical trip to the grocery store is under an hour in a cool environment, and still I often see people remove their mask in relief the moment they are out in the parking lot. At school we will be wearing masks in hot classrooms for several hours at a time. We can make this work but we need families to partner with us to make it happen in a safe way.

I have personally had to make very difficult decisions for my family this past week. I have to be at school full time and my husband is an essential worker whose work cannot be done from home. My choices were to send my daughter to school 2 days a week and then have my high-risk group mom watch her the other 3 days (possibly transmitting to my mom anything she's been exposed to at school) or have her go to the fully distance learning option. I have opted to enroll her in the fully distance option to decrease exposure for both her and my mom, even though it puts my disabled mom in the position of overseeing her education and care 40+ hours a week. Also, her education will be subpar because HIDOE's distance option for elementary students is not ready. Her school responded to me on July 16 that her distance education will be the responsibility of her teacher. This sounds great until you realize her teacher will also be teaching full time in-person… how will this work in any way that gives all students adequate access to the teacher and learning? I would far prefer her teacher have the sole responsibility of teaching her class in one safe format—distance learning. I am not being alarmist or dramatic, despite the many challenges (financial, logistic, transportation, etc.) it creates for my family I have opted to enroll my child in distance learning for Quarter 1 because I believe it is the best option for the health of my family and community.

I picked up my classroom keys on Thursday… and then I didn't do a thing, I couldn't. I am paralyzed with worry. I am worried I am going to make a decision that puts my daughter or my mom or my students in danger. I am worried that despite my best efforts to sanitize my hands, wear a mask, and socially distance and enforce this with my adolescent students that I may still bring Covid home to my family. As worried as I am, I can't even imagine how stressed those teachers are who are over 60 or have underlying health conditions. I also personally have two teacher friends who are pregnant and the recent news that Covid-19 can be transmitted in utero and can cause neurological damage to babies created a whole new level of fear for them around returning to classrooms in which they may be exposed to Covid-19 against their will.

Despite all of the stress this reopening saga is causing me, I am still so happy I am a teacher. I get to do what I love and have a positive impact in the lives of the next generation. However, I don't think I should have to risk my safety, the health of my family, or feel complicit in the spread of Covid-19. As worried as I am, I feel better now that I have shared my thoughts with you all. Maybe now I can get to work preparing for whatever lies ahead. At least now if I am forced back into the classroom on August 4, and I do mean *forced*, that is how many of us feel, I will know that I have done what I can to prevent this tragedy in the making by submitting this extensive testimony. Though I'm sure the fact that I have submitted this testimony will not provide any comfort if one of my students or family members get sick.

Give us the time we need to do this right. Let us follow the guidance of the National Academies (attached). Perhaps we can open in-person schooling to our most vulnerable learners (K-2, students with special needs, children of essential workers) after only a couple weeks of training and reconfiguring, we are just not ready.

Our keiki are counting on us to make the right decisions on their behalf. Economies can be recovered, lives cannot. There are many instances in which I would want Hawai'i to be first, reopening schools in-person is not a category we should aim to be first in. We should not let our keiki be the guinea pigs for the mainland. What it all comes down to is are we ready for in-person learning and the inevitable transmission of Covid-19 in our schools? The answer is a resounding NO.

Sincerely,
Anonymous HIDOE Teacher and Parent

P.S. I apologize for the length and disorganization of my testimony, this is how I write when I am stressed.

The following list, developed by Cassandra Wormser, is a good place to start.

Resuming face-to-face instruction SAFELY will require exploring and implementing preventative precautions and risk mitigating strategies to the fullest extent possible, including but not limited to the following:
1. State contact tracing is sufficiently staffed
2. Testing is available for teachers and students
3. Metrics are determined for each school district, with clear guidelines regarding when to implement changes in instruction model (limit or end face-to-face instruction), implementation of additional safety precautions, and threshold for school closure (number of cases of community spread)
4. Statewide school mask policy is in place
5. Adequate supply of PPE is available for teachers, staff, and students
6. Risk mitigating strategies are implemented for age groups for whom masks are developmentally inappropriate, such as small class size and maximizing use of outdoor locations
7. Outdoor classroom spaces are created and/or non-traditional locations secured/prepared to minimize time indoors (Eg. county facilities, college campuses, performance venues, vacant commercial properties)
8. Ventilation issues in every classroom are addressed to allow for maximum circulation of outdoor air
9. Air conditioning equipment is upgraded or alternative ventilation systems are in place
10. Individual student desks or work spaces are available
11. Statewide school protocols for for communication to state agencies and communities regarding potential and confirmed cases
12. Bus safety is reviewed and plans to limit exposure on buses is in place
13. Extracurricular activities are restricted (no in-person choir, contact sports, etc.)
14. Individual school plans for limiting exposure between classes are fully developed (bathroom use, start/close of school, transitions)

15. Plan implemented to address teacher and substitute teacher shortages; secure and train new employees
16. Plans to address childcare issues created by hybrid schedules for teachers, staff, and community are in place
17. Statewide school protocols for for communication to state agencies and communities regarding potential and confirmed cases are communicated
18. Quarantine related issues such as expectations for teacher quarantine, class quarantine, and school wide quarantine are addressed
19. Questions regarding mandatory teacher quarantine and paid/unpaid leave are addressed
20. Protocol in place for teachers who show symptoms
21. Training provided for teachers and staff in new safety protocols and procedures
22. Need for alternative childcare for symptomatic students to prevent families sending students to school sick
23. Education for families regarding community safety, and new school policies and procedures is provided

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Enriqueta Bond, Kenne Dibner, and Heidi Schweingruber, *Editors*

Committee on Guidance for K-12 Education on Responding to COVID-19

Board on Science Education

Board on Children, Youth, and Families

Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

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21st Century Health Threats

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KRISTIAN G. ANDERSEN, Department of Immunology and Microbiology, Scripps Research

RALPH BARIC, Department of Epidemiology, University of North Carolina

MARY T. BASSETT, Director, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University

TREVOR BEDFORD, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

GEORGES C. BENJAMIN, Executive Director, American Public Health Association

DONALD M. BERWICK, President Emeritus, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

RICHARD E. BESSER, President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

R.A. CHARO, University of Wisconsin Law School

PETER DASZAK, EcoHealth Alliance

JEFFREY S. DUCHIN, University of Washington School of Medicine

ELLEN P. EMBREY, Stratitia, Inc

BARUCH FISCHHOFF, Carnegie Mellon University

DIANE E. GRIFFIN, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

ROBERT M. GROVES, Georgetown University

MARGARET A. HAMBURG, National Academy of Medicine

DAN HANFLING, In-Q-Tel, Inc.

JOHN L. HICK, Hennepin County Medical Center University of Minnesota

KENT E. KESTER, Sanofi Pasteur

PATRICIA A. KING, Georgetown University Law Center

JONNA A. MAZET, University of California, Davis

PHYLLIS D. MEADOWS, The Kresge Foundation

TARA O'TOOLE, In-Q-Tel, Inc.

ALEXANDRA PHELAN, Georgetown University

DAVID A. RELMAN, Stanford University

MARK S. SMOLINSKI, Ending Pandemics

DAVID R. WALT, Brigham and Women's Hospital

LISA BROWN, *Director*

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PREFACE

When the Committee on Guidance for K-12 Education on Responding to COVID-19 began work on this study in May 2020, we were cognizant of the need to provide immediate, evidence-based guidance to education stakeholders around the nation on reopening schools for in-person learning. In order to offer guidance that would be useful in the planning process in advance of Fall 2020, we prepared a Consensus Study Report on a significantly abbreviated timeline. We could not have predicted the manner in which the discussions around the issue of reopening would explode while we completed this report.

As we discuss in this document, the research on the spread and mitigation of SARS-CoV-2 is expanding rapidly, leading to greater clarity on some topics while also pointing out new areas for investigation. Guidance documents for schools and districts are emerging at breakneck speed. In July 2020, opinion pieces are dominating the news media landscape, many of them staking out positions on either side of a "to reopen or not" debate and making bold claims about what is "safe". The politics of the moment are ablaze: one need only scan the headlines of U.S. newspapers to uncover the ways in which the politics around the question of reopening have overshadowed the scientific evidence.

The National Academy of Sciences (now expanded to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine) was chartered by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 to meet the government's urgent need for an independent adviser on scientific matters. Our organization is founded on the principle that independent guidance based on scientific evidence is essential for making sound policy. Development of that guidance needs to focus on interpreting scientific research without political influence: essentially, independence is necessary to ensure the integrity of the guidance. Further, as the committee refers to in the Epilogue of this report, we know that evidence and data do not provide policy direction on their own: evidence and data must be interpreted, and these interpretations are never neutral. For this reason, the consensus study process at the National Academies demands that multiple perspectives are brought to bear on the available evidence: while "neutrality" is never possible, including multiple perspectives at the table can

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support an interpretation of the evidence that reflects the concerns of multiple constituencies and is as independent from individual bias as possible.

The Committee on Guidance for K–12 Education on Responding to COVID-19 has used this consensus study process to make sense of the best available evidence related to the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 while considering the contexts of schools and districts, and how best to maintain the health and wellbeing of children, school staff and their broader communities. To the best of our ability, we have attempted to articulate guidance that will support decision-makers in doing the extremely challenging work of understanding and weighing risk, leveraging local assets, and balancing constraints in local resources. We have done this while new evidence is made available daily, and we recognize that the guidance contained in this report will need to be continually revisited as the science emerges around transmission and mitigation. Ultimately, we have written a report that puts science – what we know, as well as what we do not – at the center of the decision to reopen schools.

Given the urgent need for immediate guidance in advance of the impossibly challenging decisions ahead, the committee is acutely aware of the limitations in existing evidence. We know that one size does not fit all, and that every district will need undertake a process that involves families, administrators, experts and community leaders in the difficult task of how to redesign and reimagine what schools will look like in these uncertain times. We hope this report can offer support to education stakeholders around the nation as they make these deeply challenging decisions.

Enriqueta Bond, Committee Chair
Kenne Dibner, Study Director

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Consensus Study Report was reviewed in draft form by individuals chosen for their diverse perspectives and technical expertise. The purpose of this independent review is to provide candid and critical comments that will assist the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in making each published report as sound as possible and to ensure that it meets the institutional standards for quality, objectivity, evidence, and responsiveness to the study charge. The review comments and draft manuscript remain confidential to protect the integrity of the deliberative process.

We thank the following individuals for their review of this report: Claire L. Barnett, Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network ;Richard E. Besser, President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Xavier Botana, Superintendent, Portland School District, Portland, ME; Catherine P. Bradshaw, Research and Faculty Development, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia; David V.B. Britt, Retired President and Chief Executive Officer, Sesame Workshop; Benjamin Cowling, School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong; Kathryn M. Edwards, Department of Pediatrics, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine; Thomas V. Inglesby, Bloomberg School of Public health and School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University; Jennifer O'Day, Institute Fellow, American Institutes for Research; Diane S. Rentner, Center on Education Policy, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, The George Washington University; Jerry Roseman, Environmental Science and Occupational Safety and Health, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; Megan M. Tschudy, Department of Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Although the reviewers listed above provided many constructive comments and suggestions, they were not asked to endorse the conclusions or recommendations of this report nor did they see the final draft before its release. The review of this report was overseen by Adam Gamoran, President, W.T. Grant Foundation and Maxine Hayes, School of Medicine and School of Public Health, University of Washington. They were responsible for making certain that an independent examination of this report was carried out in accordance with the standards of the National Academies and that all review comments were carefully considered.

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Responsibility for the final content rests entirely with the authoring committee and the National Academies.

The committee's work benefitted greatly from multiple outside experts who volunteered generously to share their expertise with the committee (see Appendix A). We especially thank the study sponsors – the Spencer Foundation, the Brady Education Foundation, and the National Academies' Standing Committee on Emerging Infectious Diseases and 21st Century Health Threats – for their commitment to this work.

It was a great privilege to work with such dedicated committee members who thoroughly engaged in the study and contributed significant time and effort to this very compressed endeavor. This committee was fortunate to work with a diligent and outstanding team of National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine staff: thank you to Kenne Dibner, for her expert direction of this study from beginning to end. We thank Board on Science Education Director Heidi Schweingruber for her visionary leadership in conceiving of this study as well as her steadfast commitment to both substance and detail in all aspects of completing this report. We thank Leticia Garcilazo Green for her excellent work in both research and report production. We thank Matthew Lammers for his invaluable administrative work for this project, and Mary Filardo for her ongoing and insightful contributions as a consultant to the committee. Kirsten Sampson Snyder of the DBASSE staff deftly guided us through the National Academies review process, and Rona Briere and Allie Boman provided invaluable editorial assistance. Yvonne Wise of the DBASSE staff oversaw the production of the report.

Enriqueta Bond, Committee Chair

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Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to the nation's K-12 education system. The rush to slow the spread of the virus led to closures of schools across the country, with little time to ensure continuity of instruction or to create a framework for deciding when and how to reopen schools. States, districts, and schools are now grappling with the complex and high-stakes questions of whether to reopen school buildings and how to operate them safely if they do reopen. These decisions need to be informed by the most up-to-date evidence about the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19; about the impacts of school closures on students and families; and about the complexities of operating school buildings as the pandemic persists.

In response to this need for evidence-based guidance, the Board on Science Education of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, in collaboration with the Academies' Board on Children, Youth, and Families (BCYF) and Standing Committee on Emerging Infectious Disease, convened the Committee on Guidance for K-12 Education on Responding to COVID-19. The committee was tasked with providing guidance on the reopening and operation of elementary and secondary schools for the 2020–2021 school year. This report documents the committee's findings, conclusions, and recommendations with respect to (1) what is known (and not known) about COVID-19, (2) what is necessary to know about schools in order to make decisions related to COVID-19, (3) how determinations about reopening schools and staying open can best be made, and (4) strategies for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

EQUITY AND REOPENING SCHOOLS

The committee was particularly concerned about how the persistent inequities of the education system might interact with similar disparities in health outcomes and access in ways

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that could devastate some communities more than others. Every choice facing states, districts, and schools is being made against the backdrop of entrenched economic and social inequities made more visible by the disparate impacts of the pandemic on Black, LatinX and Indigenous communities. Without careful attention, plans to reopen schools could exacerbate these inequities.

COVID-19, CHILDREN AND TRANSMISSION

Evidence to date suggests that children and youth (aged 18 and younger) are at low risk of serious, long-term consequences or death as a result of contracting COVID-19. However, there is insufficient evidence with which to determine how easily children and youth contract the virus and how contagious they are once they do. Similarly, while some measures—such as physical distancing, avoiding large gatherings, handwashing, and wearing masks—are clearly important for limiting transmission, there is no definitive evidence about what suite of strategies is most effective for limiting transmission within a school setting when students, teachers, and other staff are present. The fact that evidence is inadequate in both of these areas—transmission *and* mitigation—makes it extremely difficult for decision-makers to gauge the health risks of physically opening schools and to create plans for operating them in ways that reduce transmission of the virus.

WEIGHING THE RISKS OF BUILDING CLOSURES

Keeping schools closed to in-person learning in Fall 2020 poses potential educational risks. Students of all ages benefit from in-person learning experiences in ways that cannot be fully replicated through distance learning. The educational risks of extended distance learning may be higher for young children and children with disabilities. In addition, without careful implementation, virtual learning alone runs the risk of exacerbating disparities in access to high-quality education across different demographic groups and communities.

Opening school buildings to some extent in Fall 2020 may provide benefits for families beyond educating children and youth. Working caregivers would have affordable, reliable

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childcare for school-age children, and families would be better able to access services offered through the school, such as provision of meals and other family supports (e.g. mental health services, school-based health services).

If and when schools reopen, staffing is likely to be a major challenge. A significant portion of school staff are in high-risk age groups or are hesitant to return to in-person schooling because of the health risks. In addition, some of the strategies for limiting the transmission of COVID-19 within schools, such as maintaining smaller class sizes and delivering both in-person and virtual learning, will require additional instructional staff.

THE DECISION TO REOPEN

While many guidance documents for reopening schools exist, many state-level guidance documents do not explicitly call on districts to reopen schools; rather they pose a series of questions for districts to consider in making decisions about reopening. This approach to providing guidance allows for regional variation and flexibility. However, it also leaves district leaders with a tremendous responsibility for making judgments about the risks of reopening while also responding to the needs of students, families, and staff.

Weighing all of the relevant factors to arrive at a decision about reopening and staying open involves simultaneously considering the public health risks, the educational risks, and other potential risks to the community. This kind of risk assessment requires expertise in public health, infectious disease, and education as well as clear articulation of the community's values and priorities. It also requires a protocol for monitoring data on the virus to track community spread. To ensure that the process of reopening schools is reflective of the community's needs and values and attends effectively to the multiple (and often conflicting) priorities of the numerous stakeholders, schools and districts will need to take care to engage a range of perspectives in the decision-making process.

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IMPLEMENTING MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Reopening school buildings will be contingent on implementing a set of mitigation strategies that limits transmission of the virus. The existing guidance documents offer an extensive list of potential strategies but little guidance on how districts and schools can or should prioritize them. Many of the mitigation strategies currently under consideration (such as limiting classes to small cohorts of students or implementing physical distancing between students and staff) require substantial reconfiguring of space, purchase of additional equipment, adjustments to staffing patterns, and upgrades to school buildings. The financial costs of consistently implementing a number of potential mitigation strategies is considerable. While some highly resourced districts with well-maintained buildings may be able to implement most of the strategies, many schools and districts will need additional financial support to institute and maintain mitigation measures. Costs are a particular concern due to the budget cuts resulting from the economic impact of the pandemic.

Poor-quality school buildings (i.e., those that have bad indoor air quality, are not clean, or have inadequate bathroom facilities) complicate reopening and may make it difficult for school districts to implement the recommended health and safety measures. This poses a problem for equitable implementation of the strategies as children and youth from low-income families disproportionately attend schools with poor-quality facilities.

Finally, even if all of the mitigation strategies are in place and well implemented, it is impossible to completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 in schools. Therefore, it is incumbent on school officials, in association with local public health authorities, to plan for the possibility that one or more students, teachers or staff will contract COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee formulated a set of recommendations designed to help districts and schools successfully navigate the complex decisions around reopening school buildings, keeping them open, and operating them safely. In its final recommendation, the committee identifies four areas of research that are urgently needed to fill the existing gaps in evidence: (1) the role of children in transmission of SARS-CoV-2, (2) the role of reopening schools in the spread of

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SARS-CoV-2 in communities, (3) the role of airborne transmission of COVID-19, and (4) the relative effectiveness of different mitigation strategies in schools.

Recommendation 1: ***The Decision to Reopen***

Districts should weigh the relative health risks of reopening against the educational risks of providing no in-person instruction in Fall 2020. Given the importance of in-person interaction for learning and development, districts should prioritize reopening with an emphasis on providing full-time, in-person instruction in grades K-5 and for students with special needs who would be best served by in-person instruction.

Recommendation 2: ***Precautions for Reopening***

To reopen during the pandemic, schools and districts should provide surgical masks for all teachers and staff, as well as supplies for effective hand hygiene for all people who enter school buildings.

Recommendation 3: ***Partnerships Between School Districts and Public Health Officials***

Local public health officials should partner with districts to:

- assess school facilities to ensure that they meet the minimum health and safety standards necessary to support COVID-19 mitigation strategies;
- consult on proposed plans for mitigating the spread of COVID-19;
- develop a protocol for monitoring data on the virus in order to (a) track community spread and (b) make decisions about changes to the mitigation strategies in place in schools and when future full school closures might be necessary;
- participate in shared decision-making about when it is necessary to initiate closure of schools for in-person learning;
- design and deliver COVID-19 related prevention and health promotion training to staff, community and students.

Recommendation 4: ***Access to Public Health Expertise***

States should ensure that in portions of the state where public health offices are short-staffed or lack personnel with expertise in infectious disease, districts have access to the ongoing support

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from public health officials that is needed to monitor and maintain the health of students and staff.

Recommendation 5: ***Decision-making Coalitions***

State and local decision-makers and education leaders should develop a mechanism, such as a local task force, that allows for input from representatives of school staff, families, local health officials, and other community interests to inform decisions related to reopening schools. Such a cross-sector task force should:

- determine educational priorities and community values related to opening schools;
- be explicit about financial, staffing, and facilities-related constraints;
- determine a plan for informing ongoing decisions about schools;
- establish a plan for communication; and
- liaise with communities to advocate for needed resources.

Recommendation 6: ***Equity in Reopening***

In developing plans for reopening schools and implementing mitigation strategies, districts should take into account existing disparities within and across schools. Across schools, plans need to address disparities in school facilities, staffing shortages, overcrowding, and remote learning infrastructures. Within schools, plans should address disparities in resources for students and families. These issues might include access to technology, health care services, ability to provide masks for students, and other considerations.

Recommendation 7: ***Addressing Financial Burdens for Schools and Districts***

Schools will not be able to take on the entire financial burden of implementing the mitigation strategies. Federal and state governments should provide significant resources to districts and schools to enable them to implement the suite of measures required to maintain individual and community health and allow schools to remain open. Under-resourced districts with aging facilities in poor condition will need additional financial support to bring facilities to basic health and safety standards. In addition, State Departments of Education should not penalize schools by withholding state-wide school funding formula monies for student absences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Recommendation 8: *High-Priority Mitigation Strategies*

Based on what is currently known about the spread of COVID-19, districts should prioritize mask wearing, providing healthy hand hygiene solutions, physical distancing, and limiting large gatherings. Cleaning, ventilation, and air filtration are also important, but attending to those strategies alone will not sufficiently lower the risk of transmission. Creating small cohorts of students is another promising strategy.

Recommendation 9*: Urgent Research*

The research community should immediately conduct research that will provide the evidence needed to make informed decisions about school reopening and safe operation. The most urgent areas for inquiry are:

- children and transmission of COVID-19,
- the role of reopening schools in contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in communities,
- the role of airborne transmission of COVID-19, and
- the effectiveness of different mitigation strategies.

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1
K-12 Schools and COVID-19: Context and Framing

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to the nation's K-12 education system. The rush to respond to the pandemic led to closures of school buildings across the country, with little time to ensure continuity of instruction or to create a framework for deciding when and how to reopen schools. States, districts, and schools are now grappling with responding to the rapidly changing situation while also trying to address the consequences of disruptions to schooling and assure the health and safety of students, families, and staff. The crisis is ongoing: even as schools are slated to begin a new academic year in Fall 2020, the United States will still be in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with no available vaccine. School systems need guidance as the pandemic continues to unfold, and communities need evidence-based information to support appropriate decisions in the midst of often conflicting medical, social, and political pressures. Although intended to be helpful, contradictory messages—from education leaders, from nongovernmental organizations, from health officials, from politicians, from parents and families—complicate decision-making for everyone.

In addition, the impact of the pandemic has laid bare the deep, enduring inequities that afflict the nation in a wide range of areas, including the education system. The persistent disparities within the education system have come into sharp focus as schools and districts have grappled with how to provide meaningful learning experiences for all students as well as how to continue providing essential supports to families and communities, including meals and access to health care services while they operate their schools remotely. Plans for physically reopening and operating schools during the pandemic must address how to provide equitable access to instruction and services for all children and families.

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STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH

In response to the need for evidence-based guidance to support education decisionmakers, the Board on Science Education of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, in collaboration with the Academies' Board on Children, Youth, and Families and the Standing Committee on Emerging Infectious Disease, convened an expert committee to provide guidance on the reopening and safe operation of elementary and secondary schools for the 2020–2021 school year (see Box 1-1).

---------- START BOX ----------

BOX 1-1

STATEMENT OF TASK

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine proposes an ad hoc committee to provide states and districts with guidance about whether and how to safely reopen schools in the 2020-2021 school year. The committee will write a report drawing on evidence from epidemiology, public health, education, and the social and behavioral sciences. The report will provide guidance on the health-related issues for safely reopening schools and the practices that should be implemented in order to maintain and monitor the health of staff and students. The report will address questions that have emerged from the planning efforts of state and district officials which are currently underway. The committee will address the following questions:

1. What indicators can state and district leaders use to determine if it is safe to reopen schools?
2. When schools reopen, what are the practices for maintaining and monitoring the health of staff and students that will be effective and practical? What are the risks and trade-offs if some practices cannot be adopted, or can only be partially adopted?

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3. How can safety decisions and practices avoid reinforcing existing inequities in education instruction and facilities? Can new safety practices help reduce inequities?
4. How should affordability be assessed in relation to mitigation recommendations?
5. What provisions should be put in place for high risk staff and students?
6. How will school mitigation be equitably adhered to?
7. How should the health and safety practices take into account the needs of students with disabilities?

---------- END BOX ----------

The Committee on Guidance for K-12 Education on Responding to COVID-19 included members with a range of expertise that included education administration and policy, educational equity, school facilities, pediatrics, public health, and epidemiology. The committee met virtually five times over a 4-week period. To augment its own expertise, the committee heard testimony from outside experts on equity in education, child development, state education policy, school facilities, post-COVID inflammatory syndrome, and SARS-CoV-2 transmission in children. For more information about the committee's process for gathering and assessing evidence, see Appendix A.

One of the primary tasks facing National Academies committees is to determine the bounds of its statement of task. Accordingly, the committee made judgments about the scope of its work.

First, although the subject of this report is reopening K-12 schools,[1] this committee was not tasked with providing guidance on how to support student learning during the pandemic. To the extent that distance learning experiences are considered an alternative to in-person schooling or one component of a potential plan for reopening schools, the committee did consider the evidence on the outcomes of distance learning experiences. However, the committee was not tasked with drawing conclusions or making recommendations about how schools can support learning or address disruptions to student learning during this time.

[1]In the majority of schools in the United States, schools did not "close" so much as transition to distance learning strategies. In this report, the committee notes that it uses the term "reopening schools" as shorthand to refer to reopening of school buildings for in-person learning in Fall 2020.

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Second, the committee determined that, given the short timeline for producing this report, an exhaustive, systematic review of all available guidance documents for schools and districts was not feasible. Since April 2020 and throughout the time the committee was developing the guidance in this report, numerous documents offering recommendations for school reopening have been released. These include guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from national education organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, from researchers in academia (for example, The Johns Hopkins University's Center for Health Security), from individual states, and from professional organizations and teachers' unions. These guidance documents vary in the extent to which they focus on best practices for public health, the practical concerns of implementation in reopening and operating schools, the needs of students, and the needs of the education workforce. The nature of the evidence base grounding these documents also varies: as of this writing, many critical pieces of the COVID-19 puzzle remained missing. There still was limited evidence and no consensus on the extent to which children—particularly those who are infected but without symptoms—can transmit the virus to others, or on how effective the various strategies schools might employ to mitigate the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 might be. The committee examined the available guidance documents and looked for commonalities. As discussed in depth in this report, the committee was repeatedly struck by the lack of definitive direction for stakeholders in these documents, which effectively leaves school districts on their own to make judgments about reopening and operating schools.

Indeed, the committee found that proliferation of guidance documents was creating confusion at all levels about how to make sense of the varying perspectives on whether and how to reopen schools for in person learning. The guidance in this report is intended to provide a framework for use by education leaders as they make high-stakes political and practical decisions about reopening schools for the 2020–2021 school year: to the extent possible, we attempted to formulate recommendations that would assist stakeholders in determining not only *whether* to reopen schools but also *how* to reopen schools. The committee recognizes the challenges faced by many schools with respect to operationalizing a number of the reopening strategies considered in this report, and where possible has attempted to comment directly on the relationship between feasibility and effectiveness. Ultimately, the goal is to integrate the most

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up-to-date evidence from medicine and public health with evidence about what is best for children and youth in view of the political and practical realities in schools and communities.

Because of the need to help stakeholders make sense of *whether* and *how* to reopen schools described above, the committee decided to structure this report in a way that would give readers both background about the challenges on the table as well as a series of tools for addressing those challenges. This decision lent itself to a report organization (described at the end of this chapter) that does not respond item-by-item to the questions posed in the Statement of Task. Rather than recapitulate the questions delineated above, the committee has integrated its responses to Statement of Task into a broader narrative that describes the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, how the pandemic has affected education in the U.S., and our consideration of how decision-makers should proceed. In order to assist readers, we have included a sentence at the outset of each chapter that points to the parts of the Statement of Task addressed in the respective chapter. Where limited evidence has hindered our ability to respond to the posed questions, we have tried to identify additional research needs.

Finally, this report is not intended to supplant existing guidance documents from government agencies such as the CDC and state Departments of Education. In responding to the Statement of Task, the committee has written a report that applies multiple scholarly perspectives to the most current evidence on the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 so that education stakeholders can make informed decisions about reopening schools. Where possible, this report offers commentary intended to shed light on the challenges embedded in these decision-making processes, but stakeholders will need to review all relevant guidance documents in concert with one another in formulating cogent plans.

EQUITY AND COVID-19

As the committee interpreted the Statement of Task, it became clear that issues of equity are among the chief challenges facing stakeholders as they decide whether and how to reopen schools. The ability of public schools to meet the needs of their communities is contingent upon the resources available to them: as we discuss throughout this report, many schools and districts are ill equipped to provide even the most basic services to students and families. More urgently, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has served to exacerbate these existing inequities by

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cutting children and families off from the resources that do exist. While many schools and districts have been able to leverage community resources to ensure that students are fed and cared for during the pandemic, there is no question that the shuttering of school buildings—and the consequent reliance on remote learning strategies—has meant that students are experiencing even more profound educational inequity than was the case prior to COVID-19.

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated ongoing challenges facing the U.S. health care system. There are significant, long-standing disparities in both individual and community health outcomes by education, income, race/ethnicity, geography, gender, neighborhood, disability status, and citizenship status (NASEM, 2017). These disparities arise from social, economic, environmental, and structural disparities that contribute to intergroup differences in health outcomes across different communities. The root causes of health inequities include the forces and structures that organize the distribution of power and resources differentially depending on race, gender, class, and other dimensions of individual and group identity (NASEM, 2017). As discussed later in this report, the COVID-19 pandemic has only deepened these disparities.

In this political and public health context, the long-standing inequities in education and health outlined above have the potential to compound each other in ways that could be catastrophic for some communities. As described later in this report, the communities most devastated by COVID-19 are often also the same communities with inadequately resourced schools. Thus, it is clear that for some communities, it will be incumbent upon stakeholders considering the risks, trade-offs, and costs of reopening schools to address these equity issues head on in determining effective strategies for responding to COVID-19.

Finally, the committee has written this report in the same moment as the Black Lives Matter protests. Driven by outrage around the murders of Black individuals by police, people have taken to the streets to protest the systemic racism woven into the fabric of U.S. society. Although this committee was not tasked with commenting on racial justice, it is not possible to talk about the role of schools in society without also acknowledging the long history of schools in perpetuating and reproducing systemic racism. This backdrop cannot be ignored as a contributing factor in how the nation will make sense of the many issues surrounding the reopening of schools.

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THE QUESTION OF REOPENING

Decisions around how to reopen schools are among the most complex and consequential of the pandemic. When the outbreak in the United States intensified in March, schools were among the first community activities to close physically, in recognition of their role as community gathering places and the priority of protecting children.

More is now known about COVID-19 than was the case when the decision to close schools physically and move to distance learning was made, but there is still more to learn. Thus far, the science has suggested that children are at lower risk of severe illness relative to adults, and many infections in children are either asymptomatic or very mild. However, the extent to which children with asymptomatic or subclinical infection are able to transmit the virus to others remains unknown. If children do transmit the disease efficiently, as they do with influenza, for example, physically reopening schools could accelerate the transmission of COVID-19 in a community.

Data needed to answer this and other important questions are unlikely to be available by the time the decision to reopen will have to be made. Regardless of these decisions, however, the committee emphasizes that so long as the COVID-19 pandemic persists, there cannot be 100% safety in reopening schools for in-person learning. Given this, school systems and their surrounding communities will have to weigh the risks and uncertainties of reopening for in-person learning against the educational and social risks and challenges associated with continuing to educate and support students using a distanced model.

REPORT PURPOSE AND AUDIENCES

This report is intended primarily to provide guidance for those tasked with setting rules and parameters around school reopening and determining strategies for mitigating the transmission of COVID-19. The report is intended to provide insight for decision-makers especially concerned with weighing issues of health and safety alongside educational priorities and organizational conditions. Because of the nature of how schools are governed in the United States, the committee recognizes that the entity ultimately responsible for the final decisions around whether and how to reopen schools will vary across the country. For this reason, the

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committee wrote this report with multiple stakeholders in mind, and we expect this report will be useful to school administrators, teachers, and other relevant school staff who are seeking such guidance. The report should also be useful for policy makers and leaders at both the state and district levels, including governors, state superintendents, tribal leaders, and school board members. Other intended audiences include parents and community members who are directly affected by these decisions.

While the committee recognizes that many state, district, and school-based decisions related to school reopening are likely to be under way (if not completed) by the time of this report's publication, we also recognize the dynamic reality of decisions around COVID-19. That is, given the constantly shifting nature of the regional spread of the virus, ongoing demand for state and local resources, and the myriad competing demands and priorities of school stakeholders, the process of assessing both whether and how to reopen schools is likely to be ongoing. Thus, the committee prepared this report with an eye toward developing a framework that would enable decision-makers to continually revisit their decisions as circumstances change and new needs and constraints arise.

Moreover, the committee recognizes that the answers to these questions are, to a large extent, contingent upon who is included in the process of answering them. Later in this report, we address critical considerations concerning which stakeholders should be engaged in making decisions for states, districts, and schools, and attempt to identify where in the education system decisions can and should be made.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the most up-to-date evidence about the spread of COVID-19, the course of the virus in children and youth (aged 4–18), and current understanding of the effectiveness of various public health measures for protecting individual and community health.

Chapter 3 examines the important role of schools in communities and the development of children and youth at different ages. Particular attention is given to the critical importance of considering the varying needs of different communities and the deep, structural inequities in the U.S. education system in making decisions about school reopening.

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Chapter 4 integrates the evidence from Chapters 2 and 3 to provide guidance on how to determine whether schools should reopen for in-person operation in Fall 2020 and conversely whether additional closures may be needed. The discussion in this chapter responds to questions 1 and 3 in the committee's statement of task (Box 1-1).

Chapter 5 focuses on the range of strategies schools can and should use to maintain individual and community health once they reopened (whether partially or fully) for in-person learning. Strategies are considered from the perspective of what is most effective for maintaining health, what is practical and affordable for schools to adopt, and how a strategy can be implemented equitably. This chapter responds to questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the committee's statement of task.

Chapter 6 lays out the committee's recommendations and highlights the urgent research needed to understand more fully the role of children in transmission, the risks posed to the community's health by operating schools in person, and the relative effectiveness of the wide range of mitigation strategies that schools are being encouraged to implement.

Discussions related to equity, which is called out in questions 3 and 6 in the statement of task, are threaded throughout the report, and the committee comments on this theme in an Epilogue at the end of this document.

Finally, Appendix A discusses the committee's approach to gathering and reviewing evidence for this study. Appendix B lists the guidance documents reviewed for this report and provides hyperlinks for this guidance as of publication. Appendix C describes a series of examples of how districts are planning to reopen schools, and Appendix D contains biographical sketches of committee members and staff.

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2

COVID-19: What Is and Is Not Known

COVID-19 is the name for the clinical disease caused by infection with SARS-CoV–2, a virus first recognized in China in late 2019. COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease that grew rapidly into a major global pandemic resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths worldwide. This chapter begins with a brief preliminary history of COVID-19. It then reviews current knowledge about the prevalence, distribution, and transmission of COVID-19; its impact on children, adults, and marginalized communities; and preliminary mitigation efforts. The chapter ends with the committee's conclusions on these topics. The committee relied on this science to guide our conclusions and recommendations related to the reopening of K-12 schools later in this report.

PRELIMINARY HISTORY OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak was first recognized in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. By late January, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared a public health emergency of international concern on the advice of the agency's emergency committee, marking a global effort to prevent, detect, and respond to the spread of the virus. In the United States, community transmission was first recognized in late February, but likely had been occurring for some time before then. By mid-March, thousands of cases had been identified across the country.

In response to the intense transmission of the virus in the United States, governors took bold steps to curtail the disease, including making unprecedented decisions to close large congregate spaces, such as churches and malls. K-12 schools were among the first institutions to close their buildings, changing access to and modalities of the delivery of education for children. For most school systems, these closures were extended for the rest of the school year and into the

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summer. As those jurisdictions look ahead to the new school year, they face complex questions about whether and how to reincorporate in-person learning.

As the disease continues to unfold, the committee is reminded of how much has been learned in the past months, yet how much remains to be known to better understand how to construct, operate, and gather in environments in a way that is safe and minimizes the risks to children and their families.

PREVALENCE AND DISTRIBUTION

Globally, as of July 10, 2020, there were more than 12.9 million cases of confirmed COVID-19, with 570,250 deaths attributed to the disease. According to data collated by The Johns Hopkins University, the United States accounts for 135,270 of these deaths as of July 10, 2020.

Of the 3.3 million reported cases in the United States as of July 10, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that roughly 5 percent of symptomatic cases in the United States are found among children. However, cases among children are undercounted because of the low volume of COVID-19 testing nationally among the pediatric population, with older age groups and those presenting with severe respiratory symptoms having been the testing priority.

According to the CDC, the vast majority of positive cases are in people aged 18–64. While people under the age of 65 represent a significant number of positive cases, those aged 60–85 who test positive for the virus are at highest risk for severe illness and death. Black, Hispanic[2]/LatinX and Indigenous populations account for 55 percent of all COVID-19 cases—a disproportionate share given that they represent about 33 percent of the U.S. population.

Not all communities in the United States have been affected by COVID-19 in the same way. States in the Northeast, particularly New York and New Jersey, were hit early and hard, but had begun to turn the corner by mid-April and as of this writing were experiencing relatively low levels of transmission. In contrast, other areas not heavily affected in the first few months of the

[2] The committee uses the term LatinX throughout this report, unless the research cited specifically uses a different term.

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outbreak, particularly in the South and West, have begun to struggle with increased transmission. These geographic and temporal patterns will likely continue to change as flareups and efforts to regain control change the epidemiological picture. School systems will need to take local epidemiology into account when making decisions about whether and how to open and close.

TRANSMISSION

SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted primarily by respiratory droplets from close contact with infected persons, and by surfaces that have been contaminated by infected persons and then touched by previously uninfected persons who then touch their mouth, nose, or eyes without first properly washing their hands. The average number of secondary cases per infectious case ranges from 2.5 to well over 3.0, making this virus considerably more infectious than influenza (Inglesby, 2020). Current evidence suggests that, given how the virus is spread, prolonged close contact in indoor environments is particularly high-risk (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020). The median incubation period, regardless of age, is estimated to be about 5 days, with a range of 2–14 days (Rasmussen and Thompson, 2020).

Scientific knowledge about the impact of the virus on adults and children is evolving. Early studies relying on symptom-based surveillance suggested that children were at lower risk than adults for contracting the disease. According to data through June 18, 2020, just 4.9 percent of confirmed cases in the United States had been diagnosed in children aged 0–17 (CDC, 2020a), a statistic supported by studies showing that the proportion of exposed household members is lower in children than in adults (Zhang et al, 2020; Jing et al, 2020; Li et al, 2020). However, one recent study using contact-based surveillance found that children had been infected at rates similar to those for adults, but that they were either asymptomatic or had symptoms too mild to be detected (Bi et al, 2020). Additional seroprevalence (the level of a pathogen in a population, as measured in blood serum) studies are still needed to understand the prevalence of the disease in children in the United States (Ludvigsson, 2020; Rasmussen and Thompson, 2020).

Although it is clear that onward transmission from infected children is possible, it is not yet clear whether children are less likely to transmit than are adults, on average. Several studies have shown that viral loads in symptomatic children are similar to those of adults. However, studies of viral load do not always correlate well with infectiousness, and little information is

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available on the infectiousness of asymptomatic or subclinically infected children. These uncertainties make it difficult to evaluate the epidemiological risks of reopening schools. If children are efficient transmitters, evidence from influenza suggests that physically reopening schools (without mitigation measures) could contribute substantially to community spread. However, if children are not efficient transmitters or if such mitigation measures as use of face coverings are very effective, physically reopening will be safer. See Box 2-1 for a summary of key findings related to transmission.

Box 2-1: Key Findings About Transmission

- The virus is transmitted primarily through exhaled respiratory droplets that contain the virus, though aerosol (very small, floating droplets) transmission and transmission from contaminated surfaces may also play a role.
- When breathing or talking normally, droplets are thought to be capable of traveling about 3-6 feet.
- Sneezing, coughing, singing, loud talking can propel droplets farther.
- Inhaling or ingesting droplets, or getting droplets in your eyes are the main mechanisms of transmission.
- Droplets can land on surfaces and then be transferred to the hands and into the mouth, nose, or eyes. It is unclear how much exposure to the virus through surface contact is necessary to cause an infection.
- Aerosols containing the virus can accumulate in the air in a closed space with limited ventilation such that people can become infected by breathing in virus-containing aerosols.
- The virus does not enter the body through the skin.
- People can be contagious before they show symptoms.
- The role of children in transmission is unclear.

---------- End Box ----------

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Compared with adults, children who contract COVID-19 are more likely to experience asymptomatic infection or mild upper respiratory symptoms. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of children who test positive for COVID-19 will have mild symptoms, and only a small

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percentage of symptomatic children (estimates range from 1 to 5 percent) will have severe or critical symptoms (Prather et al, 2020). Notably, children relative to adults are less likely to develop a fever or cough—two symptoms commonly used to identify cases through symptom-based screening (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020; Lu et al, 2020). To date, identified risk factors for severe disease among children include age <1 year (and thus not school age) or existing comorbidities. Accordingly, the role of chronic medical conditions in disease severity remains a major concern. A retrospective study of 177 children found that 63 percent of those hospitalized with COVID-19 had underlying conditions, compared with 32 percent of nonhospitalized patients, and 78 percent of critically ill children had underlying conditions, compared with 57 percent of hospitalized, non–critically ill patients (DeBiasi et al, 2020). In one study summarizing early data from the United States, 77 percent of children hospitalized with COVID-19 had at least one underlying health condition (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). In New York City, 8 of 9 (89%) children with severe COVID-19 infection had an underlying condition, compared with 61 percent of children with nonsevere illness (Zachariah et al, 2020).

Recent case reports suggest that a new hyperimmune response known as multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) may be a rare sequela of SARS-CoV-2 infection. MIS-C associated with COVID -19 infection has shown moderate to severe impacts on children's vital organs and gastrointestinal and circulatory systems, and according to some evidence has resulted in symptoms similar to those of Kawasaki syndrome, which is characterized by acute inflammation of the blood vessels in children. In Italy, for example, 10 patients with Kawasaki-like disease were identified over the course of 2 months, compared with 19 patients in the preceding 5-year period (Verdoni et al., 2020). In addition, children who have been hospitalized for COVID -19 sometimes require treatment for inflammation of the heart, lungs, kidney, gastrointestinal track, brain, and eyes. Although the epidemiology of MIS-C has not yet been well characterized, experts suggest that it is rare for COVID-19–positive children to develop the syndrome and that most children diagnosed with MIS-C recover.

There are currently two therapeutics that have received emergency use authorization for treating COVID-19, and researchers around the world are working to develop medicines and vaccines to treat and reduce the virulence of the virus. In the United States, there are more than 457 experimental drugs under development and roughly 144 active clinical trials, according to

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the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2020). It should be noted that no clinical trials have specifically targeted the treatment of children, and many unanswered questions remain about the best therapeutics for children, in part because of the limited number of cases of symptomatic disease in this population (Castagnoli et al, 2020; Kelvin and Halperin, 2020; Rasmussen and Thompson, 2020).

Population-based data tell only part of the story; how to apply those data to individual children is challenging. While it is clear that children with underlying disease, particularly those with progressive conditions (Bailey et al., 2020), are at increased risk of severe complications, it is not yet known how great the absolute risk of severe COVID-19 disease is for children with more common conditions (e.g., asthma) and how those risks should be counterbalanced against the risks of not attending school. Based on the limited data to date, clear guidelines on which children are at sufficiently high risk to require alternative educational modalities is not possible. Parents need to consult with their child's pediatrician, and accommodations need to be made for children for whom the risk of school attendance is deemed too great.

IMPACT ON ADULTS

Although children make up the majority of school populations, schools are also workplaces for many adults, and decisions around how and when to reopen schools will need to account for risks to these older and at-risk populations as well. Consideration must also be given to household members and other close contacts of children outside of the school setting, some of whom may be vulnerable to severe infection.

COVID-19 infection in adults can cause illness ranging from asymptomatic or mild upper respiratory symptoms to acute respiratory distress. Common symptoms include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and loss of sense of smell. Severity of illness is associated with age; cumulative rates of hospitalization (as of this writing) range from 27.3 per 100,000 population in adults aged 18–29 to 136 per 100,000 in adults aged 50–64. Those at highest risk of severe illness include people 65 and older and those with underlying health conditions, including chronic lung disease, serious heart conditions, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis, and liver disease, and those who are immunocompromised (CDC, 2020).

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According to the CDC, age-adjusted hospitalization rates are highest among non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native and non-Hispanic Black people, followed by Hispanic or LatinX people. Compared with the non-Hispanic white population, rates of hospitalization are approximately five times higher in the Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native population, 4.5 times higher in the non-Hispanic Black population, and 4 times higher in the Hispanic or LatinX population (CDC, 2020).

DISPRORTIONATE IMPACTS ON MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Black, LatinX, Native American, immigrant, and marginalized low-income populations have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The rates of exposure, positive tests, and deaths due to complications of the disease are greater among these populations compared with their white counterparts. The CDC reports that age-adjusted hospitalization rates are highest for American Indian or Alaska Native populations at 193.8 per 100,000, followed by Non-Hispanic Black (171.8 per 100,000) and Hispanic/LatinX populations (150.3). Asian and white populations have the lowest age-adjusted hospitalization rates, at 44.9 and 37.8 per 100,000, respectively (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). These statistics vary across the country: in New York City, over 50% of tests administered in some communities of color were positive at the height of the outbreak (NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2020). These gross disparities not only result in poor clinical outcomes associated with COVID-19 but also include a host of social and financial impacts that further exacerbate the structural challenges experienced by these groups.

There are many emerging explanations as to why people of color have been impacted disproportionately by the disease. One set of explanations relates to health status, such as a higher burden of underlying health conditions and limited access to testing and treatment. However, other factors beyond health status may contribute. For example, people of color and those from other marginalized groups are more likely to be employed in lower-wage jobs that are essential to maintaining the operations and infrastructure of communities—for example, jobs related to building sanitation, food production, transportation, material moving, stock production, and municipal services—and were therefore unable to stay home during shutdowns (Rasmussen and Thompson, 2020). They also are more likely to be unable to quarantine or isolate because of

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family housing or fear of lost wages due to unpaid sick leave. And they are more likely to be unemployed or to work in multiple part-time jobs, limiting their access to health insurance coverage and ability to pay for medical care.

PRELIMINARY MITIGATION EFFORTS

Efforts undertaken thus far to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 include stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders; testing and contact tracing; social distancing, hand hygiene, and use of face coverings; personal protective equipment; and temperature screenings.

Stay-at-Home and Shelter-in-Place Orders

Stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders are emergency measures designed to break chains of transmission and limit the spread of disease by asking or requiring that people remain at home. Beginning in March 2020, schools, businesses, and leisure activities in many states were closed, with only essential businesses and services, such as grocery stores and emergency health care, remaining open. These decisions were made largely by governors at the state level. Although extremely disruptive, these measures were effective at slowing the transmission of COVID-19 to prevent health care systems from becoming overwhelmed and to give public health officials time to improve capacities to expand diagnostic testing and scale contact tracing programs.

Testing and Contact Tracing

Diagnostic testing and contact tracing, also known as case-based management, are outbreak containment strategies that focus specifically on people who are infected and those who have been exposed and are therefore at risk of becoming sick. To implement this strategy, everyone with COVID-19–like symptoms should undergo a diagnostic test and receive the results within, ideally, 24 hours. Those who test positive are asked to remain at home (or in a hospital or hotel, if care or alternative accommodations are needed) for the duration of their illness to avoid exposing others. A public health official contacts the newly diagnosed person and conducts an interview aimed at identifying everyone who was exposed to that individual for

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10–15 minutes or more, dating back to 2 days before the onset of symptoms. Public health officials then notify those close contacts about their exposure and ask that they remain at home for 14 days so that should they become ill, they will not expose anyone else. Chains of transmission are thereby broken, and the virus is "boxed in" (Resolve to Save Lives, 2020). Case-based management strategies have allowed a number of countries, including New Zealand, Singapore, and South Korea, to control transmission substantially and safely reopen some community activities.

Physical Distancing, Hand Hygiene

Physical distancing (also called social distancing), hand hygiene, and use of facial coverings are individual-level interventions intended to reduce the risk of infection.

Physical distancing prevents the close contact that makes it easy for the virus to pass from one person to another. Six feet is the most commonly recommended distance in the United States, but this is a rule of thumb, not a definitively safe distance.

Similarly, hand washing reduces the risk of infection from hand-to-face behaviors or during food preparation or other opportunities for the virus to enter the eyes, nose, or mouth. Opportunities for hand washing include before eating; when coming in from outside; after using the bathroom or a facial tissue; and before spending time with others, particularly those at high risk of severe illness. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used if soap and water are not readily available.

Personal Protective Equipment

For health care workers and others in high-risk roles, a higher level of personal protective equipment than that for the general population is recommended to prevent the wearer from becoming infected. The CDC recommends that all healthcare personnel wear a surgical or procedural facemask at all times while in a health care facility. Personnel caring for someone with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 are recommended to wear an N95 respirator, a

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face shield or goggles, an isolation gown, and gloves. Additional guidance on personal protective equipment in health care settings is available on the CDC website.[3]

Because of severe supply shortages, medical-grade personal protective equipment is not recommended for use by the general public. The fabric face coverings recommended by the CDC provide only minimal protection to the wearer; they are intended to reduce risk to others. Because one major mode of transmission is through droplets produced during speaking, singing, coughing, or sneezing, facial coverings that act as a barrier to prevent those droplets from spreading can theoretically reduce the risk of transmission. Although this mitigation strategy is not well described in the literature, there is mechanistic plausibility for it, and use of face coverings is now recommended by both the CDC and WHO (World Health Organization, 2019).

Temperature Screenings and Symptom Screenings

Temperature screenings are intended to identify people with a fever that may indicate an infection. The screenings are usually conducted with a noncontact thermometer or according to the CDC's recommended protocol (CDC, 2020). The effectiveness of temperature screenings as a coronavirus mitigation measure is not known. Although most adults (70%) infected with the virus have a fever at some point in their illness, the proportion is lower for children (Stokes et al, 2020; U.S. Health and Human Services, 2020). In the setting of international travel, temperature screenings have been found to have a low sensitivity (Gostic, et al, 2015). In school settings, the CDC recommends that screening be conducted, but it need not be limited to temperature screening; it could also include, for example, symptom screening (Centers for Disease Control, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 2.1: Evidence to date suggests that children and youth (aged 18 and younger) are at low risk of serious, long-term consequences or death as a result of contracting COVID-19.

[3] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html

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Currently, there is insufficient evidence to determine how contagious children and youth are or how likely they are to contract the virus.

Conclusion 2.2: Black, LatinX, Indigenous people; low-income populations; and children and adults with chronic underlying health conditions are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Although all people are susceptible to the virus, regardless of race or income, underlying inequities in access to health resources, inflexible employment, and housing and economic issues make certain populations more vulnerable to transmission of and poor outcomes from the disease.

Conclusion 2.3: Mitigation strategies such as physical distancing, handwashing, use of face coverings, symptom screening and avoiding large gatherings can reduce the risk of spread of the virus, and will be particularly important in managing how students and adults interact within indoor spaces such as schools and classrooms.

Conclusion 2.4 COVID-19 has more serious health consequences for adults who contract the virus than for children. Mitigation strategies implemented in schools are especially important for protecting school staff and limiting potential transmission of the virus to vulnerable adults in the families of students and school staff.

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3

Schools and the Pandemic

In addition to fulfilling the crucial task of educating children, schools serve multiple functions in communities. Many families rely on schools for childcare, not only during regular school hours but also through extended care in mornings and after school. Schools also provide meals, health care, counseling, and access to social services. In many communities, moreover, schools serve as a center of social life, a place where everyone gathers for events and where relationships among members of the community are built. Finally, schools are workplaces.

With the closure of schools as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to many of these functions was lost. Because of these ripple effects of school closures, communities are wrestling with the difficult question of how best to balance the public health risks involved in opening and operating schools against the consequences for students, families, and communities of keeping them closed. In this chapter we outline the risks of keeping buildings closed and describe aspects of education that are especially relevant to the question of opening and operating school buildings.

THE MULTIPLE PURPOSES OF SCHOOLS

The manifold purposes of schools have never been as evident as they are at this moment, when families are attempting to serve all of those functions at once, at home. Aside from their stated purpose as a place where students are exposed to and learn the academic disciplines, schools fill critical civic and practical roles. Since the "common school" movement of the 1830s, public school advocates have stressed the role of schooling in promoting social cohesion among disparate groups through a universal scholastic experience. In this sense, schools are the quintessential public good: the argument that strong common schooling begets a strong,

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committed citizenry has long been used to justify why taxpayers should invest in education (Kober and Rentner, 2020).

Schools are also tasked with teaching disciplinary content (such as reading, mathematics, science, etc.), and providing a space where students can develop critically important socioemotional skills. While schools are certainly not the only place students can develop these skills, they are a major venue for children to interact with one another and with adults outside of their families. These interactions in schools provide important opportunities for children and youth to develop self-regulation, essential life skills, and interests and identities.

Schools are also workplaces. In addition to the more than 3.8 million full-time public elementary and secondary teachers employed in schools (McFarland et al, 2019), schools employ leaders and administrators, support staff, maintenance persons, cafeteria workers, nurses and mental health professionals, and others. As a workplace, schools are subject to the same labor laws and health and safety regulations that govern other businesses, and many school employees are represented by labor unions negotiating on their behalf.

On a personal level, families entrust their children to schools with the belief that experienced personnel and staff will act *in loco parentis* by caring for them and keeping them safe from harm. School leaders, educators, and staff play a vital role in ensuring that effective policies, procedures, and strategies are in place to ensure that the physical safety, health and well-being, and nutritional needs of students are met while in their care. Indeed, many schools now serve as a key point of coordination for basic needs supports and community services for some of the nation's most vulnerable students and families. This "childcare" function of schools is what enables many parents to participate in the U.S. workforce.

INEQUITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Any discussion of public schools in the United States needs to begin with an acknowledgment of the profound inequities that have characterized the system since it was established. Research shows that schools in which a majority of students come from economically disadvantaged communities often lack the human, material, and curricular resources to meet their students' academic and socioemotional needs (National Academies of

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Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2019a). Relative to their counterparts from wealthier families, students in these under-resourced schools have more limited access to learning opportunities and resources that can promote their success (Owens, Reardon, and Jencks, 2016). This observation is supported by research showing that poverty rates among the families of students who attend a school are associated with key measures of school quality that affect learning and achievement (Bohrnstedt et al., 2015; Clotfelter et al., 2007; Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006). Research also shows that Black and LatinX students are disproportionately more likely to be enrolled in schools with large proportions of low-income students (NASEM, 2019a).

These persistent underlying conditions are a crucial consideration when weighing the costs and benefits of reopening and operating schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Poorly resourced schools are likely to have fewer resources to devote to developing alternatives to in-person instruction when schools are closed. Low-income students and families are less likely to have access to reliable internet thus limiting their access to on-line instruction. Higher income families may have more resources to devote to enrichment activities than low income families, and may be more likely to have jobs that allow them to work from home and potentially support children during distance learning. Finally, as we elaborate later in this chapter, the age and condition of school facilities can vary widely even within the same district, creating challenges for implementation of the public health measures necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19. Further, schools and school districts vary widely in the funds and staff they can devote to implementing such measures.

In sum, any decision about school reopening and operation has to be informed by existing disparities in resources and infrastructure. Without careful attention to equity and inequity, plans for moving ahead in the 2020–2021 school year run a very real risk of exacerbating the existing inequities in ways that could have serious long-term, detrimental consequences for students, families, and communities.

RISKS OF EXTENDED BUILDING CLOSURES

When school buildings closed in Spring 2020, the majority of districts developed strategies for providing distance learning for students. It is likely that if school buildings remain

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closed for the 2020-2021 school year, distance learning options will be made available. This means that, ultimately, the decision to reopen school buildings entails weighing the potential negative impact of long-term distance learning on children and youth against the health risks of reopening to the community.

Educational Risks to Students

In this section, we discuss the educational risks to children and youth as well as the risks to families and communities if school buildings remain closed. As noted above, schools play an important role in the lives of children and youth not just academically, but also socially, emotionally, and even physically. Impacts in all of these domains need to be considered.

We begin with a brief description of the closures in Spring 2020. We examined the Spring 2020 closures for two reasons. First, they highlight the problem of uneven access when distance learning is the primary mode of instruction. Second, the trends in access suggest that some groups of students may be at greater risk of falling behind academically when distance learning is used for an extended period of time.

Schools' Responses in Spring 2020

In Spring 2020, schools were forced to close quickly with little advance warning and little time to develop robust plans for continuity of instruction or for providing the full range of services outlined above. Nevertheless, district leaders, teachers and other staff, often alongside of parents, went to heroic efforts to continue as many services as possible. A survey of 250 school districts (10,289 schools) nationwide showed that by early May, 2020, 97 percent of the districts were providing some kind of distance learning, including both web-based platforms and packets of worksheets (American Enterprise Institute, 2020). Districts varied, however, in the extent to which they provided synchronous instruction (where teachers and students interact virtually in real time) and documented students' participation in learning. Among a representative sample of 477 school systems across the country surveyed following the widespread closures (Gross and Opalka, 2020), only one in three said they expected teachers to provide instruction, track student engagement, or monitor academic progress for all students. Only half of districts expected

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teachers to track their students' engagement in learning through either attendance tracking or one-on-one check-ins.

The same survey found significant gaps between rural districts and urban and suburban school districts. Only 27 percent of rural and small-town districts expected teachers to provide instruction, compared with more than half of urban districts. Similarly, 43 percent of rural districts expected teachers to take attendance or check in with their students on a regular basis, compared with 65 percent of urban districts. Fewer rural than urban districts required progress monitoring and provided formal grades of some kind. These gaps between rural and urban and suburban districts were larger than the gaps between affluent and economically disadvantaged communities. Still, school districts in affluent communities were twice as likely as those in more economically disadvantaged communities to expect teachers to deliver real-time lessons to groups of students. The variation across districts revealed in these findings raises concern about the disparities in access to instruction that could be created if distance learning were to continue over the long term in the 2020–2021 school year.

Lack of access to the internet and to devices that facilitate effective virtual learning, as well as limited broadband, also could lead to disparities in access to instruction. According to the American Community Survey, as of 2018, 94 percent of 3- to 18-year-olds had home internet access: 88 percent had home access through a computer, 6 percent only through a smartphone, and 6 percent not at all. As with other disparities, access varies by socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity. About 26 percent of low-income 3- to 18-year-olds do not have internet access or have it only through a smartphone, compared with 12 percent of middle low-income families, 5 percent of middle high-income families and 2 percent of high-income families. Similarly, 30 percent of American Indian or Alaskan Native families do not have access or have it only through a smartphone, as is the case for 24 percent of families of Pacific Islander descent, 21 percent of Black families, 19 percent of LatinX families, 7 percent of white families and 4 percent of Asian families. Finally, in urban areas, just 2 percent of people lack adequate broadband coverage, compared with 26 percent of those in rural areas and 32 percent of those living on tribal lands (Rachfal and Gilroy, 2019).

Taken together, these trends suggest that low-income students, students of color and students in rural areas have less access to the technology needed to support virtual learning. Many districts, recognizing these disparities, went to tremendous efforts to improve access by

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providing devices and hot spots. This may mean that access is less of an issue for the Fall 2020-2021 school year, but the extent to which districts are able to surmount the access issues is likely tied to amount of resources they have as well as how many students do not have access.

Learning and Instruction in the 2020-2021 School Year

The reality of the current public health situation is that even if school buildings reopen to some extent districts are likely to use a blend of in-person and distance learning. In some locations, the majority of students and teachers may be in the building. However, even where community transmission is minimal and where the school buildings can accommodate all students in new configurations that allow for physical distancing, medically vulnerable students and staff will likely need to have a distance option. This raises the question of how districts should make decisions about how to prioritize which students will be most at risk from extended distance learning and how to ensure that access to distance learning options is equitable.

Children and youth of all ages benefit from in-person learning both academically and socio-emotionally. The potential for real-time feedback and discussion, opportunities to interact with peers, and warm, supportive relationships with adults in schools are all key features of in-person learning that are difficult to replicate in distance learning.

The consequences of long-term distance learning are likely to differ depending on the age of students and their specific learning needs. Elementary-aged children may struggle with distance learning, especially if an adult is not available to support them. This is the case especially for children in grades K-3, who are still developing the skills needed to regulate their own behavior and emotions, maintain attention, and monitor their own learning (NASEM, 2019b). As children move into later childhood and adolescence, they become better able to regulate their own emotions and behavior (NASEM, 2019c). In addition, the long-term consequences of being unable to make adequate progress through distance learning may be more severe for students in grades K-3 than for older students. Research has demonstrated long-term, negative consequences for children who are not reading at grade level by third grade, particularly those in low-income families (NRC, 1998).

Children and youth with special needs or with individualized education programs may also be at greater risk from long-term distance learning. Even with adequate resources at home,

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they often cannot derive the same level of service (e.g., career and technical education, physical therapy, medical care) that in-person contact provides.

Finally, as noted in Chapter 2, parents and caregivers who are low-income and are Black, and LatinX are more likely to be employed in jobs where they cannot telecommute. This means that even when students have access to appropriate technology, there may not be an adult in the home during the day who can provide the additional support that some students may need to benefit from distance learning. These trends may mean that long-term use of distance learning can result in even larger disparities in learning outcomes by income and race/ethnicity than already exist.

Recognizing all of these factors, the American Academy of Pediatrics (2020) recently released a statement that **"**strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school."

Equity and Distance Learning

As noted above, troubling differences exist in access to the internet and devices that allow students to engage fully in virtual learning. Therefore, a major challenge of developing models for operating schools that include some form of distance learning will be ensuring that all students have equitable access to instruction. Recognizing this challenge, The Education Trust and Digital Promise (2020) collaborated on a guide for digital learning that poses important questions related to equity, identifies key challenges, and offers examples of possible strategies. The key questions are as follows:

1. "How are you ensuring that all students have access to the devices they need to fully participate in distance learning?
2. How are you ensuring that all students have access to reliable, high-speed internet to continue their education?
3. How are you supporting schools in structuring instructional time to meet the needs of students with varying levels of access to the internet and technology?
4. How are you supporting students with disabilities who need specialized instruction, related services, and other supports during school closures?

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5. How are you ensuring the instructional needs of English Learners are supported during school closures?
6. What kind of support and professional development are you providing to school leaders and teachers, especially in schools serving students of color and students from low-income backgrounds and educators of students with disabilities and English learners?
7. How are you supporting the social and emotional well-being of students, their parents/caregivers, and teachers during school closures?
8. How are you maintaining regular communication with students and families—particularly the most vulnerable—during school closures?
9. How are you measuring student progress to ensure students and families have an accurate picture of student performance for this school year?
10. How are you supporting all high school students, especially seniors, in staying on track to graduate and preparing for college and career?"

Risks to Families and Communities

With the closure of school buildings, districts either stopped providing the various supports and services noted at the beginning of this chapter or had to quickly develop innovative ways of continuing them. Reopening school buildings will allow schools to provide these supports and services more easily and in a more complete way.

Economically disadvantaged children and their families rely on school meals to meet basic nutritional needs. During school closures, school districts were immediately compelled by state and local governments and local education agencies to provide breakfast and lunch to any student, regardless of family income. A survey of 250 public school districts (10,289 schools) showed that although all the schools were closed by late March 2020, 95 percent were providing meals to students as of May 8, 2020 (American Enterprise Institute, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact economic conditions nationwide, many more families are likely to need access to meals through schools.

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In some communities, schools have increasingly become a key point of coordination for health and mental health services for vulnerable students and families. For health services, some schools offer extensive support including health centers located in the school while others offer little support. About 81% of public schools employ a full or part-time school nurse (Willgerodt, Brock & Maughan, 2018). School nurses conduct screenings, administer medications, address acute injuries and illnesses, and help students get needed care. They also help prevent disease outbreaks by tracking student immunization requirements and monitoring health trends (Willgerodt, Brock & Maughan, 2018).

Students and families receive mental health support from a range of professionals in the school setting including school counselors and psychologists. Before being forced by the pandemic to close, many schools were already recognizing the need to provide more extensive mental health supports for students; for some students, schools are the primary source of these supports. Even prior to the pandemic, many children and youth—especially those of low socioeconomic status—experienced traumatic events (Phelps and Sperry, 2020). These adverse events often have long-term negative impacts (Phelps and Sperry, 2020). The pandemic is likely to increase the number of students who need this kind of support, particularly those whose families have experienced economic hardship or death.

If and when schools physically reopen, the socioemotional and mental health needs of students and families will need to be a high priority. While much attention has been paid in the media to potential learning losses and the negative consequences for academic achievement, the collective trauma of the pandemic should not be underestimated. Particularly in the communities hardest hit by COVID-19, children may have experienced the extreme illness or death of multiple close family members even as their families and communities are facing the stress of serious economic setbacks. While it was beyond the scope of the committee's charge to specify how schools should help students and families cope with this trauma, we stress the importance of making this kind of supportive response a priority. These efforts will need to include school counselors and other specialized staff as well as teachers.

Finally, while the time that children and youth spend in school is about much more than childcare, public schools do serve as the primary childcare option for many working caregivers. The extensive building closures meant that families were left without childcare. For caregivers who were able to work from home, this meant juggling work responsibilities while also caring

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for children and supporting their on-going learning. However, as noted above, many caregivers, particularly those who are low-income, Black, or LatinX do not have access to jobs that allow them to work from home. Without reliable childcare they must make difficult decisions about leaving children home alone, or leaving their jobs.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR OPENING AND OPERATING SCHOOLS DURING COVID

While the risks of building closures to students and families discussed above are important to consider, the needs and concerns of the school workforce are equally important. In addition, the condition of school facilities poses practical constraints on how well strategies for maintaining the health of staff and students can be implemented.

The School Workforce

Reopening school buildings safely also means finding a way to ensure the safety of the professionals who work in schools. School districts are often one of the largest employers in local communities. In 2017, elementary, middle, and secondary schools nationwide employed more than 5.5 million people (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Of these, 3.1 million (65%) were teachers and instructors. Other than teachers, the two largest occupations in schools were janitors and cleaners (300,000) and education administrators (250,000).

Many school personnel are understandably concerned about the health risks involved in returning to full-time, in-person instruction. Twenty-eight percent of public school teachers are over 50, putting them in the higher risk age category for serious consequences of COVID-19 (Taie and Goldring, 2020). On a survey of teachers, principals, and district leaders administered by the EdWeek Research Center in June, 2020, 62% reported that they were somewhat or very concerned about returning. Any plans for reopening will need to address these concerns.

The effects of the pandemic on the long-term teacher workforce are still unknown, with some evidence indicating that previous recessions have induced strong candidates to enter the relatively stable teaching profession (Nagler, Piopiunik, and West, 2017). At the same time, many schools, particularly those that serve the least advantaged students, struggled even before

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the pandemic to fill positions in such areas as upper-level mathematics, science, and special education (Learning Policy Institute, 2018), and there are concerns that reopening schools could exacerbate existing staffing shortages. Just under one-fifth of teachers and almost one-third of principals are aged 55 or older, the age group that accounts for the majority of COVID-19 deaths (Will, 2020, Taie and Goldring, 2020). These are also the teachers who have the option of early retirement, and a wave of concurrent retirements could severely limit schools' options for serving students.

School Facilities and School Organization

The scale of the reopening of U.S. public K-12 school buildings is staggering: prior to the pandemic, nearly 50 million students and 6 million adults attended school in 100,000 buildings, encompassing an estimated 7.5 billion gross square feet and 2 million acres of land (Filardo, 2016). School facility infrastructure was designed to support dense communities of children, managed by adults. Facilities were designed to group students in maximum class sizes; utilize large spaces for eating, outdoor play, and assemblies; and require the sharing of laboratories, art, music, and physical education spaces to reduce costs. The 2017 National Household Travel Survey found that of the 50 million children (aged 5–17) who traveled to school each day in the United States, 54.2 percent were usually driven in a private vehicle, 33.2 percent took a schoolbus, 10.4 percent walked or biked, and 2.2 percent used other forms of transit (Federal Highway Administration, 2019). At least 35 percent of U.S. schoolchildren travel to school in close proximity to others. School reopening and operating/mitigation strategies will have to be implemented within this organizational structure.

Prior to the pandemic, many students across the country attended school in aging facilities with significant deferred maintenance problems; inadequate cleaning; and obsolete facilities systems, components, and technology. Crowding also characterized many schools and classrooms. Research shows that high-quality facilities help improve student achievement, reduce truancy and suspensions, improve staff satisfaction and retention, and raise property values (Filardo, Vincent and Sullivan, 2019). They also are integral to ensuring educational equity and opportunities for students and communities (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

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School districts are being advised to employ mitigation measures that are challenging. In order to reopen and operate in the COVID environment, school districts are being advised to monitor and improve their indoor air quality, increase the levels of cleaning, ensure frequent handwashing for students and staff, and employ space utilization to physically distance students and staff. Each of these mitigation measures poses unique operational challenges. They are especially difficult to implement in aged facilities with deferred maintenance and inadequate custodial support.

According to a recently released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on school facilities, about half (an estimated 54 percent) of public school districts need to update or replace multiple building systems or features in their schools (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2020). An estimated 41 percent of districts need to update or replace heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in at least half of their schools, representing about 36,000 schools nationwide. Ventilation and air filtration are among the mitigation measures schools are asked to consider. These measures include taking steps to increase the amount of fresh air in classrooms and other occupied areas, installing HEPA air filters in mechanical systems, and moving instruction outdoors. Schools with modern HVAC systems are able to implement the HVAC mitigation recommendations; as the GAO study shows, however, this is not the case for nearly half of the nation's public schools.

Many school districts, particularly those serving low-income students, already suffer from having inadequate custodial staff. Cleaning to higher standards will require hiring and training additional custodial staff and procuring additional cleaning supplies and equipment. Older school facilities will not have enough bathrooms or sinks for frequent handwashing. The faucets and fixtures of lavatories that are in poor condition will not be in full working order, making frequent handwashing protocols difficult to implement.

Staffing schools to meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) physical distancing guideline of a minimum 6-foot separation between students is also a major challenge for districts. Class sizes currently vary tremendously. Children with high levels of needs, including those who are medically fragile, are in very small groups of as few as 6 students, while typical class sizes are anywhere from 18 to 35 students, depending on age, subject, and the resources of the school district. Physical distancing with class size limited to as few as 10–18 students per class, depending on classroom square footage, will require more

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instructional staff. School districts are exploring major schedule changes to meet the CDC's physical distancing guideline, with students spending far less time in onsite instruction. Meeting that guideline is even more challenging for poorly resourced districts. Insufficient in-school technology infrastructure, for example, means that synchronous instruction that could serve students both onsite and offsite will be difficult if not impossible.

Many studies have found that poor-quality school facilities harm occupant health, attendance, achievement, and school quality,[4] and children from low-income and non-white communities disproportionately attend schools with such facilities (Filardo, Vincent, Sung, & Stein, 2006). These conditions complicate reopening decisions and COVID-19 mitigation strategies (Filardo, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 3.1: Keeping schools closed to in-person learning in Fall 2020 poses potential educational risks for all students. Children and youth benefit from learning experiences that include support from a teacher and interactions with peers. Even when it includes virtual interactions, distance learning cannot take the place of in-person interaction. Young relative to older children and youth are less able to engage effectively in distance learning without adult support. Additionally, it is often more difficult to provide a robust educational experience for students with disabilities in distance learning settings. As a result, the educational risks of long-term distance learning may be higher for young children and children with disabilities.

[4]There is strong evidence in the academic literature that the quality of school facilities affects student achievement through myriad factors, and is a factor in student and teacher attendance, teacher retention and recruitment, child and teacher health, and the quality of curriculum (Alexander and Lewis, 2014). Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health recently wrote, "the evidence is unambiguous—school buildings impact student health, thinking, and performance" (Allen et al., 2017 pg. 3). Poor or substandard school buildings and grounds negatively affect the health of children and adults in schools, which in turn negatively affects their performance (Uline and Tschannen-Moran, 2008). Studies also have found significant correlations between poor structural, conditional, and aesthetic attributes of school buildings and low student learning and achievement (Maxwell, 2016). Likewise, most, though not all, studies examining the relationship between school facility investments and student achievement have found a relationship (See for example, Cellini, Ferreira and Rothstein 2010, Martorell, Stange, and McFarlin, 2016, Neilson and Zimmerman, 2014, and Conlin and Thompson, 2017).

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Conclusions 3.2: Opening school buildings/campuses for in-person learning to some extent in Fall 2020 would provide benefits for families beyond educating children and youth. Working caregivers would have affordable, reliable childcare for school-age children, and families would be better able to access services offered through the school, such as provision of meals and other family supports (e.g. mental health services, school-based health services).

Conclusion 3.3: Even if schools open for some in-person learning in Fall 2020, they are likely to need to continue providing some distance learning for a subset of students. However, schools and communities vary in whether they have the infrastructure necessary to provide high-quality virtual learning for all children and youth. Without careful implementation, virtual learning alone runs the risk of exacerbating existing disparities in access to high-quality education across different demographic groups and communities.

Conclusion 3.4: Staffing is likely to be a major challenge if schools reopen for in-person instruction in Fall 2020. A significant portion of school staff are in high-risk age groups or are reluctant to return to in-person schooling because of the health risks. In addition, some of the strategies for limiting the transmission of COVID-19 within schools, such as maintaining smaller class sizes and delivering both in-person and virtual learning, will require additional instructional staff.

Conclusion 3.5: Children and youth from low-income families disproportionately attend schools with poor-quality facilities. Poor-quality school buildings (i.e., those that have bad indoor air quality, are not clean, or have inadequate bathroom facilities) complicate reopening while the COVID-19 pandemic continues and make it difficult for school districts to implement the recommended health and safety measures. Physically reopening schools with poor-quality school buildings that hinder mitigation measures may make reopening during the pandemic riskier for occupants.

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4

Deciding to Reopen Schools

As stated in Chapter 1, decisions around how to reopen schools are among the most complex and consequential of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this chapter, the committee considers the available epidemiological evidence as well as the needs and priorities of U.S. education stakeholders to offer guidance on these decisions. The discussion in this chapter responds to questions 1 and 3 in the committee's statement of task (see Box 1-1). Taking what is known about decision-making in this moment together with principles from existing guidance documents, we offer a path forward for decision-makers in establishing a clear plan for reopening schools that is based on shared goals and values, ongoing risk assessment, and careful context monitoring.

UNDERSTANDING RISK AND DECISION-MAKING DURING COVID-19

A 1996 National Academies report entitled *Understanding Risk: Informing Decisions in a Democratic Society* suggests that risk characterization

> must be seen as an integral part of the entire process of risk decision-making: what is needed for successful characterization of risk must be considered at the very beginning of the process and must to a great extent drive risk analysis. If a risk characterization is to fulfill its purpose, it must (1) be decision driven, (2) recognize all significant concerns, (3) reflect both analysis and deliberation, with appropriate input from the interested and affected parties, and (4) be appropriate to the decision (National Research Council, 1996, p. 16).

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From the outset of this work, the committee has acknowledged the tremendous challenges associated with characterizing risk such that stakeholders can make cogent, safe decisions around reopening schools in the time of COVID-19. Among other things, decision-makers must weigh competing priorities that include the pressures of different constituent groups, the need to reopen schools to facilitate parents' full-time return to the workforce, beliefs and perceptions around the import of school for students' socioemotional and academic well-being, labor demands from every type of staff person working in schools, looming fiscal constraints, and the health and safety concerns of parents.

Beyond this complex set of priorities, the committee recognizes the tremendous physical and emotional strains faced by all stakeholders in the education system: as of this writing, the majority of schools in the United States had been closed for in-person learning since March 2020, and a large swath of parents had been without childcare. Beyond having to engage with state and local virus mitigation strategies (e.g., stay-at-home orders, mandated use of face coverings) and witnessing the tremendous loss of life experienced by many communities, critical stakeholders face the very real threat of "decision fatigue[5]." The committee also recognizes that many communities of color have joined together to lead historic protests toward advancing racial justice in the United States, and concerns about reopening schools will necessarily take place against that backdrop.

The public health risk from COVID-19 *is* the reason that schools closed in Spring 2020. As the start of the 2020-2021 school year approaches and districts and schools contemplate reopening for in-person activities (whether fully or partially) it is important to understand that it will not be possible to prevent transmission entirely. The increased contact that will occur when people come together in the school, even with many mitigation measures in place, will more than likely lead to new cases of the virus. The question is not a matter of whether there will be cases of SARS-CoV-2 in schools, but what the spread of the virus will look like once cases begin to emerge. Stakeholders need to understand this risk and be willing to move forward with reopening for in-person learning despite it.

[5] Decision fatigue is idea that the act of making choices repeatedly can lead to depletion of the decider's psychological resources, which can lead to less optimal choosing over time (Vohs, Baumeister, Schmeichel, Twenge, Nelson, and Tice, 2008).

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In light of this complex constellation of considerations, the committee notes that decisions about reopening schools are likely to be more iterative and ongoing. As circumstances change and understanding of COVID-19 grows, states, districts, and schools will likely need to decide and redecide not only whether to reopen but also how to know when it may be necessary to shut down again. Later in this chapter, we outline a framework for advancing that iterative decision-making by relevant stakeholders in a given community.

EXISTING GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

As part of its charge, the committee reviewed the rapidly emerging guidance documents related to reopening K-12 schools. While a robust analysis of the content of these documents is beyond the scope of our charge (see Box 1-1 in Chapter 1), we did note a few themes in this guidance related to who should make decisions about reopening schools and how best to make those decisions.

One important issue the committee identified—one also highlighted by a number of presenters during the committee's information-gathering sessions—is that the majority of state-level guidance documents do not explicitly call on districts to reopen schools, but are framed as a series of questions for districts to ask while making decisions about reopening. While this approach to providing guidance does allow for regional variation and sensitivity to contextual factors, it also leaves school districts with a tremendous responsibility for determining how to meet their obligations to students, families, and staff. Many school districts are left without a clear roadmap for understanding just what kind of schooling they are responsible for as the pandemic continues with respect to both academic experiences and the many social services schools are required to provide (see Chapter 3). In addition, placing the full burden on districts leaves open the possibility that if a student, a staff person, or someone in the community contracts COVID-19 in the school, the district will be held responsible.

Guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—in particular, the "decision tree" included with its formal guidance—serves as the basis for most state-level documents on school reopening. A challenge of the CDC decision tree is that it states that hygiene, cleaning, and physical distancing should be implemented "as feasible." Districts are left to make judgment calls about the extent to which they should push to implement all of the

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recommended strategies and what the consequences might be of relaxing one or the other of those strategies. Some districts may have ready access to experts in infectious disease and public health who can provide input for these decisions, but others do not. For example, many rural communities have either a small or no local health department, and personnel in those agencies may have limited expertise in infectious diseases (Cheney, 2020; Eisenhower and Meit, 2016).

A close, ongoing partnership between education leaders and departments of public health that starts during planning for reopening is essential. Such a partnership is particularly important for continuing to monitor the incidence of COVID-19 in schools. The need for this partnership, however, raises the question of how communities where both the schools and the public health infrastructure are under-resourced will be able to maintain the health of the community when schools reopen.

In looking across the guidance documents, the committee felt it was especially important to point out the challenging reality facing school districts that are now responsible for making the majority of decisions related to school reopening. As noted above, this local decision-making is reasonable insofar as it accounts for the significant variation in the spread and prevalence of COVID-19 across different parts of a given state. Further, districts differ in their goals for schooling; as we discuss below, districts across a state are likely to have different supports in place for distance learning models. Different communities in the same state will inevitably have different kinds of needs associated with in-person education. That said, Chapter 3 describes the reality that districts within the same state are likely to have significantly different resources (financial, human capital, etc.) to put towards reopening schools. In light of the fiscal challenges many school districts will face in the 2020-2021 school year, states will need to have a role in ensuring an equitable distribution of resources and expertise so that districts can implement the measures required for a strategic reopening in their local contexts.

A FRAMEWORK FOR DECIDING WHEN TO REOPEN SCHOOLS FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING

Given the range of stakeholders invested in decisions around reopening schools, the committee recognizes that those decisions and processes will be complex. In most cases, decisions about reopening are within the purview of the district superintendent and school board.

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In this context of multiple stakeholders and often conflicting priorities, the committee recognized that a data-driven, real-time decision-making framework can help stakeholders break down the decision-making process into manageable, informed steps.

To articulate such a framework, the committee turned to testimony provided as part of our information-gathering process by epidemiologist and professor of integrative biology Dr. Lauren Ancel-Meyers of the University of Texas. The University of Texas COVID-19 Modeling Consortium Framework (Box 4-1) can be used in pursuit of three main objectives: (1) help decision-makers establish goals for reopening and the levels of risk they are willing to assume in pursuit of those goals, (2) determine what policy and mitigation strategies are reasonable and desirable, and (3) establish a protocol for continuous feedback through data monitoring.

Box 4-1: University of Texas COVID-19 Modeling Consortium Framework for Decision-Making on Reopening Schools

What are the goals and constraints? Examples include:

- Educational and service objectives
  - E.g. Is the goal to maximize in-person school days? Ensure education by any modality? Meet other health, resource, and safety needs?
- Mitigate COVID-19 risks
  - Recognize that a zero-tolerance policy may not be feasible
  - Determine acceptable levels of risk, numbers of cases, absenteeism, etc.

What are the policy and structural options? Examples include:

- Establish masks, hygiene, and distancing measures; set facility capabilities; identify priority groups for on-campus activities
- Special precautions for high-risk groups (e.g. cocooning)
- School closures of various durations
- Rapid testing, tracing, and isolation to contain clusters
- Organize various measures into clear stages

How exactly should risk be tracked to and used to drive policy? Examples include:

- Understand and monitor the available data
  - Confirmed cases, hospitalizations, deaths in schools or community, absenteeism, health screening in person or via app, etc.
- Set clear thresholds for enacting or relaxing measures

Source: Dr. Lauren Ancel-Meyers, expert testimony to the committee.

End Box 4-1

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The University of Texas COVID-19 Modeling Consortium Framework, although not specifically developed for school reopening decisions, supports education stakeholders in working with public health officials to continually make and remake decisions based on data as they become available (for more information on who should make these decisions, see the following section). The steps in the decision-making process, outlined in Box 4-1, are described below.

First, the framework directs decision-makers to establish values, goals, and priorities for reopening schools. For example, does a community want students to attend school in-person because parents are in overwhelming need of childcare? Or are stakeholders determined to ensure continuity of learning by any available means, including virtual or distance learning modalities? Ancel-Meyers suggests that once those goals have been established, decision-makers can weigh the goals against the level of risk they are willing to assume: What is the threshold of case counts this community is willing to accept before closing in-person facilities? What levels of absenteeism are acceptable to keep a majority of students in classrooms?

In step 2, stakeholders and decision-makers review mitigation strategies and policy options for schools. It is at this point in the process that stakeholders will need to be explicit about what the constraints are on the various policy options on the table: for example, schools and districts may need to conduct an assessment of how robust the current distance learning infrastructure is for supporting at-home learning. Stakeholders may also want to consider local variability in seasons as they make plans to support fresh air exchange in classrooms, or even consider whether outdoor learning is a realistic possibility.

Finally, stakeholders will need to establish protocols for collecting and monitoring data related to the COVID-19 context in the community. In this process, relevant decision-makers establish clear thresholds for what those data mean; for example, once a school sees X number of cases, it will enact Y policy. Figure 4-1 illustrates how the City of Austin, Texas, is operationalizing this staged approach to reopening schools and businesses.

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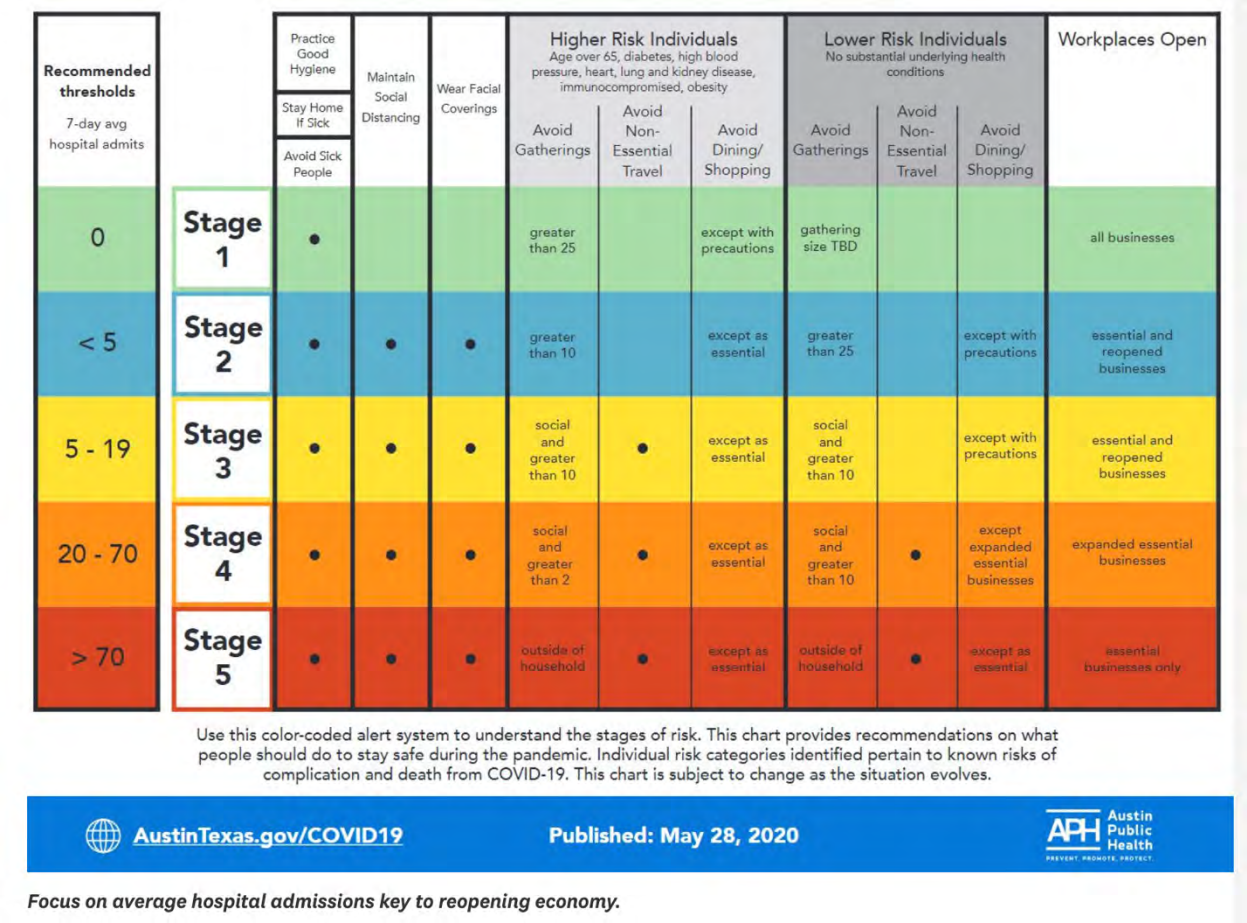

Figure 4-1: Austin-Travis County COVID-19 risk-based guidelines.

Source: austintexas.gov/COVID19.

In the case of Austin, Texas, thresholds for the staging of community reopening are determined by using the number of 7-day average hospital admissions to understand the level of ongoing risk posed by COVID-19. In the red stage (more than 70 long-term hospital admissions), the city is open only to essential businesses, and mitigation strategies for all individuals (masks, physical distancing) are in place, regardless of their personal risk status. As case counts decline, the city moves from Stage 5 down to Stage 1. As the city proceeds through stages, mitigation strategies slowly ease—first for lower-risk individuals and then for higher-risk individuals—and more businesses open up. If case counts increase, the city can move back to an earlier stage of intervention, depending on the level of COVID-19 risk.

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The state of Oregon is using a similar approach for the reopening of schools and businesses (https://govstatus.egov.com/reopening-oregon#baseline), with counties submitting plans and data to the state to receive approval for moving through different phases of reopening. Counties must demonstrate progress on seven indicators: declining prevalence of COVID-19, minimum testing requirements, clear and actionable plans for contact tracing, identified locations for safe isolation and quarantine, a clear plan for keeping workers safe and healthy, sufficient health care capacity, and a sufficient supply of personal protective equipment. As progress on these indicators is demonstrated, restrictions on businesses and individual behaviors ease.

Districts, local health officials, and communities could operationalize similar approaches in establishing plans for reopening schools that leverage potential mitigation strategies and policies together with ongoing data monitoring. Chapter 5 details the mechanisms that need to be in place to ensure that states, districts, and schools can carry these plans forward in implementing the reopening of schools, and Appendix C provides a number of examples for how districts are planning to reopen in Fall 2020.

APPROACHES TO COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

As a process for deciding whether schools should reopen is established, schools and districts will need to ensure that the decisions made reflect their community's priorities. To this end, school districts and communities must be willing to listen and co-plan with community members in order to engage all relevant constituent groups.

In May 2020, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) released a "playbook" for enhancing or establishing a local task force to address issues related to COVID-19. This document describes in depth both what kinds of stakeholders should be involved in decision-making (see Box 4-2) and a series of five action items that the task force should take up (discussed later in this chapter). After reviewing this document and considering expert testimony provided as part of our information-gathering process, the committee agrees that community engagement in decisions related to reopening can help ensure that the divergent concerns of education stakeholders are, at a minimum, brought to light and taken into account. In the absence of this kind of community input, decision-makers risk the possibility that school staff and

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families will not understand the values or logic behind certain choices, potentially leading some stakeholders to divest from schools altogether.

Box 4-2: Suggested Members of a School District's COVID-19 Task Force

State and District	Schools	Other Representatives
• Board of education members • Legislators • Superintendent • Assessment director • Chief academic officer • Communications director • Curriculum and instruction director • Exceptional student • services director • Finance director • Federal grants coordinator • Facilities director • Food and nutrition director • Human resources director • Operations director • Policy director • School safety director • Support services director • Technology director • Transportation director	• Administrators • Teachers • Parents • Students • Community members • School nurses, or school-based health care providers*	• Associations for teachers, school boards, superintendents and principals • The state community college system and higher education agency • Child care agencies or providers • Public television stations • State or local public health departments • Hospitals or health care providers • Mental health officials or clinicians • Public safety agencies • County emergency management • Telecommunication networks • Workforce development agencies • Business partners • Representatives from relevant labor unions*

* indicates category added by the Committee.

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End Box 4-2

In particular, districts can deepen partnerships with families and communities by involving them in planning for the reopening of schools; the decision to reopen; the preparation of students for learning; and implementation of newly required policies, procedures, and plans. This involvement is particularly important for families and communities historically marginalized by public systems, which often experience the greatest impact from inequitable schooling.

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The SREB (2020) report identifies five major action items for a community task force once it has been assembled:

1. Define the problem the task force will address, and establish a clear scope and purpose to guide the group's work.
2. Define a timeline for the work of the task force, and communicate it to task force members and other shareholders.
3. Identify and secure the participation of task force members, ensuring that the membership is balanced and aligns with the group's communicated purpose.
4. Gather background information and secure available resources.
5. Establish a multifaceted communication plan.

Attending to these items up front makes it possible to then focus on the actual work of making decisions related to reopening schools.

The committee notes that while the precise details of both who is involved in the planning processes and the processes themselves are likely to change depending on local needs, an inclusive process whereby stakeholders are asked to be explicit about their goals, values and priorities will yield long-term benefits when challenging real-time decisions must be made. The committee also notes that a truly inclusive process for decision-making is not merely about ensuring diverse perspectives at the table, but also about conversations designed such that multiple parties can truly engage. Task forces may want to consider providing supports for families with first languages other than English to ensure that their voices, priorities, and interests are included in the decision-making process. Task forces may also want to leverage partnerships with community organizations to help in assessing the comfort of families with returning to school, as well as in making information accessible to diverse families through such communication strategies as live-streamed meetings and public (socially distanced) town halls.

Additionally, task forces need to consider transparent communication of the reality that while measures can be implemented to lower the risk of transmitting COVID-19 when schools reopen, there is no way to eliminate that risk entirely. It is critical to share both the risks and rewards of different scenarios, and to consider interventions that can be implemented to communicate to families that every effort is being made to keep their children safe in schools.

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While all stakeholders will not necessarily agree with the final decisions about when and how to reopen schools, an inclusive process will help build trust in school leadership so that decisions can be implemented quickly should conditions change.

MONITORING COVID-19 CONDITIONS

Schools and districts will need to work with their state or local health departments to plan for the monitoring and evaluation of epidemiological data to iteratively assess disease activity in the county (or relevant area). Indicators of particular interest include the number of new cases diagnosed, the number of new hospitalizations and deaths, and the percentage of diagnostic tests that are positive. Schools also will need to monitor absenteeism and alert public health officials to any large increases (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020a). According to the CDC's school decision tree, communities with substantial community transmission may need to implement extended school closures. For this reason, the committee notes that it is especially important that decisions about what constitutes substantial community transmission and under what conditions schools would again close will need to be outlined *before* the school year begins. Finally, stakeholders tasked with monitoring data may also want to consider how to ensure that the data is disaggregated by race, class, and (depending on the size of the school or district) zip code. Given what is known about the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on under-resourced communities, disaggregated data may offer targeted insight into how to approach mitigation equitably.

One particularly effective strategy for monitoring COVID-19 conditions is to implement a testing program that assists in screening for positive cases. Currently, the CDC recommends that schools refer the following individuals to healthcare officials for further evaluation: (a) individuals with signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and (b) asymptomatic individuals with recent known or suspected exposure to SARS-CoV-2 to control transmission. School staff are not currently expected to perform tests themselves, although they may serve that purpose in their capacity in school-based health care centers. Finally, the CDC does *not* recommend universal testing of students and staff (i.e. testing everyone even if asymptomatic), because it is not currently understood whether or not a universal testing program contributes to a

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reduction in transmission (CDC, 2020c). Further, as the CDC guidance on testing and tracing notes,

> Implementation of a universal approach to testing in schools may pose challenges, such as the lack of infrastructure to support routine testing and follow up in the school setting, unknown acceptability of this testing approach among students, parents, and staff, lack of dedicated resources, practical considerations related to testing minors and potential disruption in the educational environment (CDC, 2020c).

To the extent that testing is part of a school's monitoring plan, it may consider partnering with a local health department to implement a contact tracing program. Contract tracing involves identifying individuals who come into contact with others who have tested positive for COVID-19, and asking affected individuals to voluntarily quarantine for two weeks to curtail transmission. Although the combination of robust testing and contact tracing programs can serve as a useful strategy in limiting transmission, it may require a substantial investment of local resources. As we discuss in detail in Chapter 5 of this report, schools and districts will need to the weigh the benefits of testing and tracing against the costs and utility of the numerous other mitigation strategies that will need attention.

Monitoring will need to occur at the individual level as well. All staff and parents of children should have initial and periodic training on basic infectious disease precautions, including the identification and management of symptomatic personnel and students, and instructions to remain at home if symptoms do appear. The CDC has guidance for parents (CDC, 2020b).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 4.1: Decisions to reopen schools for in-person instruction and to keep them open have implications for multiple stakeholders in communities. These decisions require weighing the public health risks against the educational risks and other risks to the community. This kind of risk assessment requires expertise in public health, infectious disease, and education as well as a clear articulation of the values and priorities of the community.

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Conclusion 4.2: A decision-making framework *and* an inclusive process for making decisions can help support community trust in school and district leadership so that decisions can be implemented quickly throughout the school year.

Conclusion 4.3: Education leaders need to have a way to monitor data on the virus so they can track community spread. If there is substantial community spread, schools may need to close for in-person learning. Decisions about what constitutes substantial community transmission and under what conditions schools would again close need to be outlined before the school year begins.

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5

Reducing Transmission When School Buildings Are Open

The decision to reopen school buildings also involves developing a plan for how schools will operate once they are open and how to balance minimizing risk to students and staff while being realistic about cost and practicality. It is important to bear in mind that in order to protect the health of staff, students, their families and the community, schools will not be able to operate "as normal".

This chapter addresses areas that districts must consider when they are developing plans for reopening: implantation of mitigation strategies, creating a culture for maintaining health, and what to do if someone in the building tests positive for the virus. We begin with an overview of the "hierarchy of controls," a framework for approaching environmental safety in workplaces that is useful for organizing implementation plans. This is followed by a discussion of the most common mitigation strategies for reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in light of existing epidemiological data, published guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and practicality in school settings. We then provide brief commentary on what to do when someone tests positive. The chapter ends with the committee's conclusion with respect to mitigation strategies for schools. This chapter responds to questions 2, 3, 4, & 5 in the statement of task (see Box 1.1).

It is important to emphasize that this chapter is not meant to replace the guidance issued by the CDC or by states. Rather, the committee offers considerations intended to help districts think through their implementation plans based on the scientific community's understanding of transmission of the SARS-CoV–2 virus as of July 6, 2020. In addition, the committee does not discuss the steps needed to safely reopen buildings that have been closed for a long period of time (e.g. the safety of the water or HVAC systems). Districts should follow guidance on this provided by the CDC.

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IMPLEMENTING MITIGATION STRATEGIES

As discussed in Chapter 2, and noted in the CDC guidance, COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people breathe, talk, cough, or sneeze. The virus may also spread to the hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth, or eyes causing infection. This means strategies that limit spread of and exposure to the droplets are the most important for mitigating transmission. As the CDC notes, the risk of transmission in schools is highest when there are "full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities". Risk is lowered when "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."

The guidance provided by the CDC identifies numerous strategies that can be implemented in school to lower risk of transmission. Implementing the full set of strategies may be difficult in many districts due to costs, practical constraints, and the condition of school buildings. As noted in Chapter 4, the decision tree provided by the CDC recognizes these constraints in saying that strategies be implemented "as feasible". While this gives districts flexibility in developing their plans, it also leaves district leaders with the challenge of making judgment calls about how much they should push to implement all of the recommended strategies and what the consequences might be of relaxing some of the strategies.

The major challenge for everyone trying to make judgments about the effectiveness of the various strategies in schools is that the evidence about COVID-19 is still emerging. As a result, the committee was not able to provide strong, definitive guidance on the relative effectiveness of each of the various strategies schools are considering to limit the spread of the virus. However, the committee does offer commentary on the strategies that are especially important to implement well based on current understanding of the disease and lessons learned from research on other viruses.

In this section, the committee identifies a set of key mitigation strategies that schools could implement to reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. To develop this set of strategies, the committee referred to the CDC guidance for schools as well as guidance from states in conjunction with committee members' understanding of evidence about transmission. In

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addition, the committee heard expert testimony from epidemiologists and infectious disease doctors who offered their perspectives on which strategies are most promising and which are less likely to be effective (for more information on this process, see Appendix A). We also considered existing infrastructure in schools and additional cost to implement.

The Hierarchy of Controls

To organize the discussion of strategies, the committee used the hierarchy of controls framework. The hierarchy of controls, an approach to environmental safety, is a framework used in many workplaces to prioritize strategies for minimizing people's exposure to environmental hazards (Figure 5-1). This hierarchy structures protective measures according to five levels:

1. Elimination
2. Substitution
3. Engineering
4. Administrative
5. Personal Protective Equipment

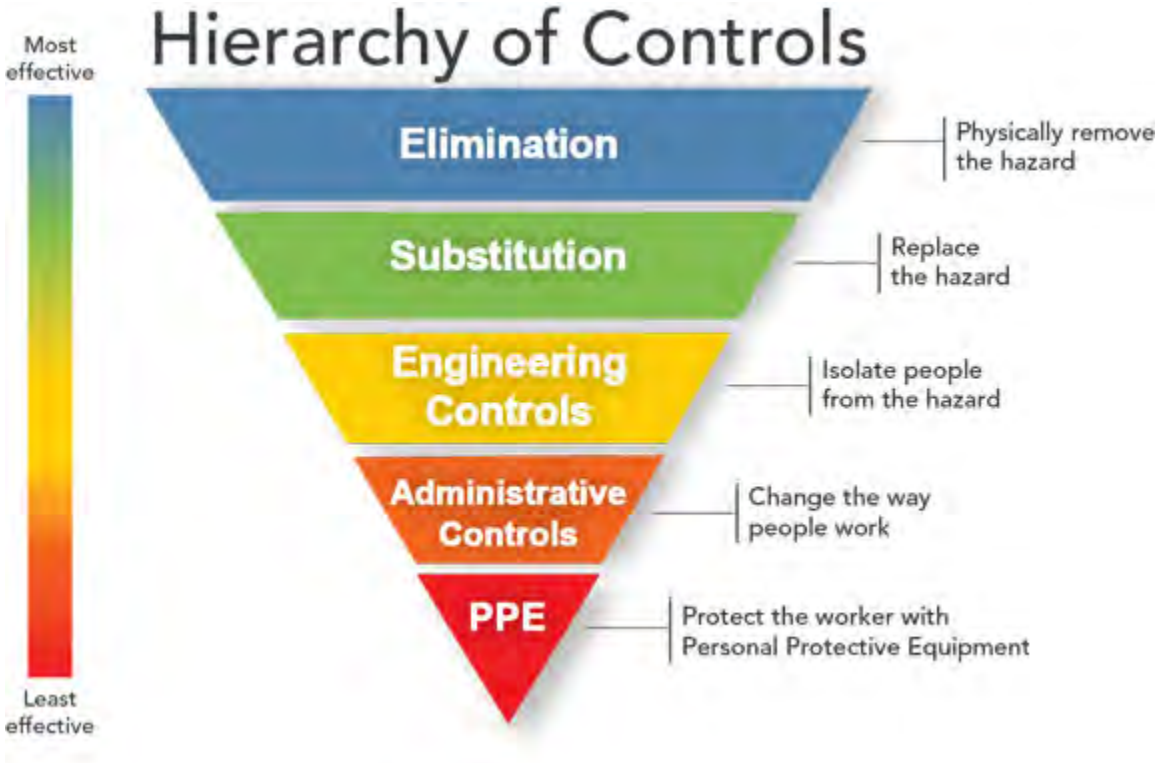

Figure 5-1: The Hierarchy of Controls.

SOURCE: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2015.

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Generally, strategies that fall within the levels at the top of the hierarchy are viewed as more effective than those within the levels at the bottom. This means that when this framework is used, the top levels—elimination, substitution, and engineering controls—are given higher priority. In the context of an infectious disease, however, which strategies need to be prioritized at each level is determined by the route of transmission of the disease. A disease that is spread only by direct physical contact requires different engineering or administrative controls relative to a disease that is spread through droplets. The challenge in the case of the current pandemic is that the transmission of COVID-19, particularly the role of children in transmission, is still not entirely understood (see Chapter 2).

Applying the hierarchy of controls to COVID-19 and schools, elimination and substitution do not apply to school buildings as they reopen. Elimination would be complete control of the virus or a widely distributed vaccine. Substitution means replacing a hazard (in this case the virus) or a hazardous way of operating (being in school) with a nonhazardous or less hazardous substitute. Since COVID-19 cannot be "replaced," the option here is to adopt new, safer processes—for example, moving to distance learning. As discussed in Chapter 3, however, this option may have negative consequences for children, families, and communities if implemented for long periods of time.

Engineering controls eliminate a hazard before an individual comes into contact with it. In the case of COVID-19, such strategies could include improving ventilation, erecting barriers around an area (for example, for front office staff), changing the configurations of classrooms to allow for physical distancing, and performing regular cleaning.

Administrative controls change the way people work. In the context of schools, this means eliminating large gatherings, creating groupings of students and patterns of movement that limit contact with other people, instituting handwashing routines, emphasizing coughing and sneezing etiquette, and providing training in the new routines. The majority of the CDC guidelines fall into this category of controls. Finally, personal protective equipment (PPE), masks and face shields, is lowest in the hierarchy of controls.

The best way to manage the risk of viral spread in schools is to implement strategies at all three levels (engineering, administrative, and PPE). Given the current context, however, with only an emerging understanding of transmission and how it relates to children, it is difficult to

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provide evidence-based guidance as to which specific strategies at each level will be most effective. One potential pitfall of implementing strategies based strictly on the hierarchy of controls is that doing so could drive schools to focus primarily on implementing all possible strategies at the engineering level first, on the assumption that this is the most effective way to limit exposure. However, the emerging evidence about COVID-19 suggests that several strategies at the administrative level—including creating routines that allow for physical distancing, eliminating large gatherings, and stressing handwashing—are very important for limiting transmission (see Chapter 2 for more discussion of transmission). In addition, there is increasing evidence that wearing masks can lower transmission. The following section highlights strategies that appear to be especially important to implement or that receive substantial attention in districts' plans (see Table 5-1 for a summary of the strategies).

Personal Protective Equipment

Ideally, all students and staff, including elementary children, should wear fabric face coverings or surgical masks. For teachers and staff, N95 masks would be most effective, but would be difficult to teach in. Surgical masks offer better protection than cloth masks, but may not be available. Requiring only staff to wear masks is less effective because the fabric face coverings recommended by the CDC do not fully protect the wearer from droplets. Rather, the masks are most effective for reducing spread from people who are infected by containing droplets. Children in early elementary grades, especially kindergartners, may have difficulty complying with mask usage. Nonetheless, efforts should be made to encourage compliance. (Strategies for encouraging mask use and other new health behaviors are discussed in a later section).

Face shields have been recommended by some researchers as an alternative to face masks, and may be an option that would allow students to see teachers' faces (Perencevich et al, 2020). However, the relative effectiveness of using face shields in lieu of fabric masks is unknown, and neither the CDC nor the World Health Organization has commented on this as an option for control of SARS-CoV-2 in the community. Considering that face shields allow droplets and aerosols to escape into the surrounding air, it is unlikely that face shields alone can be as effective as other types of masks.

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Administrative Controls

As noted in the previous section, many of the mitigation strategies outlined by the CDC fall into the administrative control level of the hierarchy of controls. We have identified a set-set of these as particularly important to implement, given the way COVID-19 is transmitted: Hand-washing, physical distancing, cohorting, and avoiding use of shared instructional materials or equipment.

Routines for Hand-Washing and Hygiene

The CDC (2020) recommends that individuals wash their hands:

- "Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage
- After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc.
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies."

To make these recommendations feasible in a school setting, the committee observes that at a minimum schools will have to provide handwashing opportunities after using the restroom

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and before eating, along with making alcohol-based hand sanitizer available in classrooms and shared spaces such as a gymnasium or cafeteria. Providing frequent opportunities for hand-washing may be especially difficult in school buildings with limited or poorly functioning restroom facilities. In these cases, hand-sanitizer can be used, if improving or repairing restrooms is not possible.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing (also called social distancing) is a key strategy for limiting transmission. Fundamentally it involves avoiding close, physical contact with other people. The CDC recommends that people keep at least 6 feet away from people outside of their household.

In the context of schools, physical distancing may require many changes to routines and use of space. Classrooms will need to be organized to allow students and the teacher to maintain distance from each other It may be necessary to limit the number of students in the classroom or to move instruction to a larger physical space. Different staffing models will likely need to be considered depending on the particular strategy employed. In schools that are already overcrowded, creating space for physical distancing may be difficult.

Another important aspect of physical distancing is limiting large gatherings of students, such as in the cafeteria, in assemblies, or for indoor sports events. This also means avoiding overcrowding at school entrances and exits at the beginning and end of the school day, potentially by staggering arrival and departure times. The specific strategies will depend on the characteristics of each school building and the number of students in attendance.

Cohorting

Cohorting denotes having the same small group of students (10 or fewer) stay with the same staff as much as possible. This model has been used in some other countries that have reopened school buildings. For example, in Denmark class size was limited to 10-11 students to allow distancing between students and staff were limited to working with 1 or 2 classes (Melnick et al, 2020).

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A benefit of this approach is that it limits the number of different people with whom any single individual has contact. This approach is likely easiest to implement in elementary schools, because elementary classrooms are already organized such that one teacher works consistently with the same group of students. In the upper grades, students typically move between classes, often mixing from class to class. Of interest, the use of small cohorts for middle school students may be more developmentally appropriate than the usual structure of students changing classrooms for every class because it offers an opportunity for developing a closer relationship with the teacher (Eccles et al, 1993).

In planning for different versions of cohorting, it is important to keep in mind that the main goal is to limit the exposure to others of *all* individuals, including both teachers and the students. Thus models whereby a teacher sees multiple cohorts of students in the same day, or across several days, may not meaningfully reduce risk for the teacher. To limit the amount of contact each teacher has with multiple different students, schools could consider creative uses of virtual instruction. For example, a cohort of students might be physically with a lead teacher, while teachers of specific subjects would join the class virtually for a period of time.

Avoiding Use of Shared Materials and Equipment

Because of the risk of transmission from surfaces, it is important to minimize shared objects such as manipulatives used in teaching, art supplies, or technology. If they are shared, they need to be cleaned between uses (see section on cleaning below).

Engineering Controls

Key strategies at the engineering control level are cleaning, ventilation and air quality, and temperature and symptom screening. However, it is important to stress that implementing these strategies only is unlikely to limit transmission enough to prevent students or staff from getting sick.

Surface Cleaning

Regular cleaning is important, but schools will find it nearly impossible to clean as frequently as would be needed to ensure that surfaces remain completely virus-free at all times.

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Emerging evidence suggests that the virus persists on most hard surfaces for 2–3 days and on soft surfaces for 1–2 days (van Doremalen et al, 2020). The CDC has guidance on cleaning and disinfecting available that schools can use to guide their procedures (CDC, 2020). At minimum, surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected nightly.

Even with regular cleaning, it is important to minimize contact with shared surfaces such as manipulatives or other hands-on equipment in the classroom. Strategies for minimizing transmission via shared surfaces include assigning equipment to individual students to prevent multiple users, and disinfecting items between users. Use of soft-touch items that are difficult to disinfect should be minimized.

Cleaning is especially important when someone in the school building becomes sick while on site and/or tests positive for COVID-19. In these cases, the protocols laid out in the CDC guidance should be followed, including closing off space(s) where the infected person was for 24 hours if possible before cleaning and disinfecting. In many cases, this may include shared restrooms.

Air Quality and Ventilation

As noted above, the primary mechanism of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is through respiratory droplets traveling through the air. While many of these droplets are heavy and drop out of the air, some may remain airborne for a longer period of time as aerosols (very small, floating droplets).

In a small space with poor ventilation, the droplets and aerosols in the air may accumulate enough to create a risk of infection. For this reason, it is important to ensure that classrooms and other spaces in the school building are well-ventilated. Ventilation systems should be operating properly and, when possible, circulation of outside air should be increased, for example by opening windows and doors. Also, use of face masks will limit the number of droplets and aerosols that are released into the air.

Maintaining sufficient ventilation may be difficult in classrooms with windows that do not open, or in schools with poorly functioning ventilation systems. As noted in Chapter 3, poor air quality and outdated HVAC systems may be particularly problematic for under-resourced schools.

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A recent report from the Harvard School of Public Health (Jones et al, 2020) identifies key strategies for ensuring air quality and proper ventilation. The report emphasizes the importance of bringing in outdoor air to dilute or displace any droplets containing the virus that may be present in the air. They also recommend avoiding recirculation of indoor air, increasing filter efficiency, and supplementing with portable air cleaners. The report's authors also stress the importance of verifying the performance of ventilation and filtration through testing and working with outside experts. These additional strategies represent additional costs to schools, but they may be especially important for older school buildings with outdated HVAC system, or for buildings with limited ventilation.

Temperature and Symptom Screening

Temperature and symptom screening is mentioned in two places in the CDC decision tree. While it is important to be sure that people who are infected do not enter the building, there is mounting evidence that people may be contagious before they show symptoms of COVID-19. This means that screening may not identify all individuals who pose a risk for bringing the virus into the school. In addition, temperature screening alone is less likely to identify individuals than temperature and symptom screening.

Applying the Strategies to Transportation

Many districts around the country use transportation systems, such as buses, to enable safe, reliable passage to school for children. As noted in Chapter 3, about 33 percent of students in the United States ride a school bus to get to school. A major concern for school districts is that it is impossible to transport students to schools in a school bus while maintaining a 6-foot distance between children. If buses were to reduce capacity in accordance with physical distancing guidelines, they would likely be able to transport only 8–10 students per bus at a time. Given this constraint, epidemiological wisdom points to limiting the use of buses. When their use is necessary however, strategies include avoiding seating students in the two seats closest to the driver, disinfecting shared surfaces (e.g., hand rail, buttons) after each stop if possible, disinfecting all surfaces between trips, and for HVAC systems, using the highest setting and changing filters regularly.

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A small number of students, about 2 percent, across the country, take public transportation to school. This poses additional risks of exposure over which districts have little control.

The Cost of Mitigation

The cost of implementing all of the suggested strategies is very high. The Council on School Facilities estimates that the total cost for schools nationwide could be $20 billion. A recent estimate reported by EdWeek (Will, 2020) suggests that for the average district, the cost of implementing the strategies might be as much as $1,778,139 for the 2020–2021 school year (see Box 5-1 for the breakdown of estimated costs for an average district). This estimate is based on costs for a district with 3,269 students, 8 school buildings, 183 classrooms, 329 staff members, and 40 school buses operating at 25 percent capacity.

The actual costs will vary by school district depending on regional prices, economies of scale (how much volume districts can purchase), and the availability of labor and goods necessary to comply with recommended physical distancing and cleaning protocols. The model for the transportation costs assumes running buses at 25 percent typical capacity to adhere to physical distancing guidelines. The costs do not include the extra funds needed to provide staff and students with training in the new protocols.

Box 5-1
Estimated Costs of Implementing Recommended Strategies for Limiting the Transmission of COVID-19 in Schools (for an Average District)

Health & Safety Protocols: Total = $1,232,000

Increasing custodial staff for increased cleaning/disinfecting of schools and buses to prevent spread	**$448,000**
Placing at least one full-time or part-time nurse in every school building	**$400,000**
Assigning one transportation aide per bus to screen students' temperatures (public health officials have not recommended this practice)	**$384,000**

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Transportation & Childcare: Total = $235,144

Resume before/after-school childcare programs (with physical distancing and cleaning protocols)	**$168,750**
Fog machines and cleaner for buses	**$55,860**
Hand sanitizer for buses	**$10,534**

Personal Protective Equipment: Total = $195,045

Disposable masks for students who do not bring their own (est. 30% of students)	**$148,190**
Daily disposable masks for in-school staff	**$44,415**
Gloves for custodial staff (5 pairs per day for two custodians per school)	**$1,440**

Equipment for Health Monitoring & Cleaning: Total = $116, 950

Electrostatic disinfectant sprayers	**$33,600**
Disinfectant wipes for classrooms (four containers per day/per classroom)	**$16,833**
Hand sanitizer for students in classrooms	**$39,517**
Deep cleaning of school after a confirmed case	**$26,000**
No-touch thermometer (one per school)	**$640**
Oximeter (one per school)	**$360**

Additional Costs

Physical distancing signs and markers in the building	$1,500 for districts to prepare and post signage on physical distancing in their schools and buses; $100 for each school to prepare site markings on sidewalks and play areas

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Add motion-sensor dispensers for soap and water in the bathrooms.	$300 per touchless faucet, $200 to outfit each toilet with touchless controls, $50 per touchless soap dispenser, and $150 per touchless paper towel dispenser; districts might also need to upgrade their plumbing to support those installations, which would cost significantly more
Staff to monitor bathrooms	
Repurposing additions to classrooms	$7,500 for educational facilities space planners to help reorganize space and furniture in a district's school buildings
Add outdoor classrooms if possible	A one-time cost of $5,000 to $10,000 per classroom, depending on whether the district purchases a tent or canopy to protect students from sun and precipitation; districts need seating for students, some sort of covering to provide shade, portable teaching supplies such as white boards, and storage for supplies
Install plastic shields in the front office	$1,000
Repair HVAC	Major repairs for HVAC systems are estimated to cost about $3 a school building square foot, and replacements are estimated to be about $10 per building square foot

HVAC = heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (systems).

NOTE: This estimate is based on costs for a district with 3,269 students, 8 school buildings, 183 classrooms, 329 staff members, and 40 school buses operating at 25 percent capacity.

SOURCE: Association of School Business Officials International; AASA, the School Superintendents Association.

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END BOX

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These extra costs for reopening for in-person learning and limiting transmission of the virus among students and staff are coming at a time when state budgets are shrinking because of the economic impact of the pandemic. This means that education budgets are being cut making it even more difficult for districts and schools to find the funding to implement all of the necessary measures. As a result, districts will have budgetary reasons for only partially implementing the CDC's recommended strategies as well as practical ones. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4, districts and schools have little guidance on how to select which strategies might be most effective for limiting the spread of COVID-19.

Mitigation Strategies in International Contexts

As K-12 schools in the United States move toward reopening for in-person learning, it may become possible to learn about the effectiveness of strategies for mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 from other countries that have reopened their school buildings. Although research on these strategies in international contexts is nascent, understanding how other school systems have managed the crisis may provide insight into what schools in the United States can do to mitigate transmission as they reopen. Table 5-2 provides a snapshot of the strategies and methods other countries have used when reopening their schools to in-person learning.

CREATING A CULTURE FOR MAINTAINING HEALTH

The suite of strategies for limiting transmission during the pandemic will create many new routines that students and staff will need to follow and behaviors they will need to adopt. These measures will be most successful if the majority of people follow them consistently. As the CDC guidelines point out, this will require that all staff and students learn about the strategies, why they are important, and how to adhere to them as well as possible. The CDC also recommends the use of signage to remind students of the strategies and to illustrate how they can move through the building in ways that maintain physical distancing.

Providing training for all staff and students is an important part of ensuring that the strategies are implemented properly. The training should be provided by local public health officials possibly in collaboration with the school nurse. Staff and families should also receive

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training in how to identify symptoms and on criteria for when they, or their children, should stay home because they are sick.

Even with training and signage, staff will need to help students continue to follow these strategies. The fact that staff will need to monitor and enforce the guidelines around mask wearing, physical distancing, and handwashing opens up the possibility that patterns of enforcement of the new measures will follow the same trends that are seen in school discipline more generally. Should this be the case, Black students, boys, and students with disabilities will be particularly vulnerable to potentially harsh responses if they fail to follow the strategies consistently (Anderson and Ritter, 2017; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018). To guard against this, positive approaches to encouraging adherence to the strategies are preferred over punitive ones.

Finally, ensuring that students and staff who are just beginning to experience symptoms do not come to school is one of the most important mitigation strategies that schools can adopt. To encourage this, the CDC recommends that districts and schools consider developing policies that encourage people to stay home when they are sick. For example, by eliminating perfect attendance awards for students or making sure that staff know there will not be negative repercussions if they need to stay home.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK

As the committee notes, even with all of these mitigation strategies in place, it is likely that someone in the school community will contract COVID-19. The CDC provides guidelines on what to do in these circumstances. We highlight key steps here.

First, families and staff need clear guidance on symptoms of COVID-19, when to stay home, and the procedure for notifying school officials. As noted above, training for families and staff that includes these procedures will be needed. Clear guidance reminding families of the procedures should be sent to families and made available on-line. In addition, parents and students should have access to information, resources and referral for COVID-19 testing sites prior to the beginning the school year.

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If someone develops symptoms at school, they need to quickly be isolated from the rest of the school population. This means that schools will need to create an isolation area and have designated staff, such as a school nurse, to monitor and care for the sick individual until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility. Ideally, the isolation area will be vented to the outside to prevent droplets containing the virus to circulate in the rest of the building.

In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators will need to notify local health officials, school staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality. They will also need to inform any individuals who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms.

As noted earlier in the chapter, cleaning and disinfecting is especially important after someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 has been in the school. The areas used by the sick person will need to be closed off for at least 24 hours, if possible, before being cleaned and disinfected. School leaders will need to consult with public health officials about whether short-term closure of the building might be warranted (for example, if several students in a classroom, or several staff members test positive).

Students and staff who have been sick will not be able to return to the school until they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation. Caregivers and staff will need to wait for formal notification from the school nurse or a physician that it is permissible for them to return to school.

Monitoring health of students and staff and caring for individuals who become sick will place a heavy burden on school nurses and other school health staff. In schools that currently employ part-time nurses or do not have a school nurse at all, staffing will need to be supplemented. Local health departments of hospital health systems may need to partner with schools to provide nurse triage services within the school district to handle parental health calls/inquiries and to act as a referral resource for faculty and staff to maintain the optimal health of children.

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CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 5.1: The recommended list of mitigation strategies is long and complex. Many of the strategies require substantial reconfiguring of space, purchase of additional equipment, adjustments to staffing patterns, and upgrades to school buildings. The financial costs of consistently and fully implementing the strategies are high.

Conclusion 5.2: The extent to which mitigation strategies can be implemented and how will vary depending on the age of students, the physical constraints of the school building, and the resources available in the school or district. Implementing all of the recommended strategies will likely be challenging depending on the resources and the size and condition of the schools within a district. Districts that are already highly resourced and have well-maintained buildings will be more likely to be able to implement the full suite of strategies.

Conclusion 5.3: There is limited evidence about the relative effectiveness of the various mitigation strategies recommended for schools. This limited evidence base makes it difficult to provide clear guidance to schools about which strategies they may be able to relax or eliminate—given practical and cost constraints—without increasing the risk of viral transmission. Without input from outside experts, districts and schools are left on their own to make these difficult judgments.

Conclusion 5.4: Although, cleaning and improving air quality and ventilation are important mitigation strategies, they are insufficient for limiting transmission of the virus enough to keep people from getting sick. Mask wearing, hand-washing and physical distancing are essential.

Conclusion 5.5: Even with all of the mitigation strategies in place and well implemented, it will be impossible to bring the risk of contracting the virus to zero. As long as the virus is present in communities, schools may be subject to transmission.

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Table 5-1: Summary of Mitigation Strategies

Implementing all of the COVID spread mitigation strategies fully and faithfully will maximize protection of students and staff. However, districts and schools have limits on staff, time, and resources. Additionally, each school and school community will have unique qualities and the public health conditions in communities will vary. This table is provided for stakeholders and districts to use to evaluate how to apply mitigation strategies in their schools given the limits to their resources and what is now known about the mechanics of how these mitigation strategies affect the spread of the virus.

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Strategy	Role in limiting transmission	Considerations for implementation
Wearing masks (surgical, fabric)	The virus is spread through respiratory droplets from breathing, talking, coughing and sneezing. The mask catches the droplets before they can spread.	Requiring masks for all students and staff is most effective.
Hand-washing	Droplets containing the virus can spread to hands from coughing, sneezing or from surfaces. If a person then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes they may become infected. Hand-washing removes the virus.	Soap and water is most effective. Hand-sanitizer is appropriate to use if soap and water are not available. Minimum times for hand washing -- before and after eating, after using the restroom.
Physical distancing -- Maintaining 3 to 6 feet between students and staff	When people are in close contact they can easily breathe in droplets containing the virus that other people have exhaled. Most droplets will fall to the ground within 3-6 feet of being exhaled.	How this is implemented will depend on the number of students in the school and the size of classrooms. The key is maintaining sufficient space between students and between students and the teacher. There is no evidence about the relative effectiveness of different ways of implementing physical distancing in schools.
Eliminating large gatherings	If a person is sick, large gatherings with close contact mean that many other people may be infected.	This includes eliminating assemblies, large sports events, and large numbers of students in common areas (cafeteria, hallways, entryways)
Creating cohorts (one teacher stays with the same group of students)	Smaller groups of students in a classroom allow for more distance between people. In addition, limiting contact with many other people, cuts down on possible exposures.	Members of the cohort do not mix with the rest of the school. The teacher should also have minimal contact with students and other staff outside of the cohort.
Cleaning	Droplets can land on surfaces and remain active for 1-3 days. If a person touches the surface with their hands and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes, they can contract the virus.	Regular cleaning is important to eliminate the virus on surfaces. Routine cleaning with appropriate disinfectant is sufficient. Cleaning is particularly important for high touch areas and shared materials.
Ventilation	While most droplets containing the virus fall out of the air, some can stay suspended. If enough suspended droplets accumulate they could be breathed in by occupants. When fresh air is added to a room where virus is present, the amount of virus is diluted or eliminated.	Small rooms with poor ventilation are likely to increase risk of transmission. Open windows and doors to increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Moving classroom activities out-of-doors is also an option for improving ventilation.
Air filtering	Mechanical heating, cooling and ventilation control and regulate the amount and quality of air in buildings for humidity, temperature and particulates. For efficiency, some systems recirculate the indoor air as much as possible to reduce the energy costs of treating outside air. If there are droplets containing the virus in the air, recirculation could spread COVID within a building. Upgraded filters can remove droplets containing the virus from the air.	To provide maximum protection, upgrade the filters used in the HVAC system, increase the fresh air intake, and increase the level of humidity.
Temperature and symptom screening	The intent is to identify individuals who have COVID-19 and prevent them from bringing the virus into the building.	There is increasing evidence that people are contagious before they show symptoms. This means the considerable time and costs to screen all students before entering buses or schools may be of limited value for identifying COVID cases. Studies in airports show limited value. However, parents should know the symptoms for COVID-19 and screen their children and household for them each day before sending children to school.

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Table 5-2: Summary of Health and Safety Practices in International Contexts

Summary of Health and Safety Practices

	China	Denmark	Norway	Singapore	Taiwan
Context	Gradual reopening since March	Opened April 15 for children up to age 12	Opened April 27 for Grades 1–4	Opened until April 8, then closed due to non-school-related outbreak	Never fully closed; local, temporary closures as needed
Health screening	Temperature checks at least twice daily	Temperature checks on arrival	Temperature checks on arrival	Temperature checks twice daily	Temperature checks on arrival
Quarantine and school closure policy	Quarantine if sick until symptoms resolve	Stay home 48 hours if sick	Stay home if sick until symptom-free 1 day	Quarantine required and legally enforced if one has had close contact with a confirmed case; school closes for deep cleaning if case confirmed	Class is suspended 14 days if one case confirmed, school suspended 14 days if 2+ cases
Group size and staffing	Class size reduced from 50 to 30 in some areas of the country	Class sizes reduced to accommodate 2-meter (6 feet) separation in classrooms; non-teaching staff provide support	Maximum class size 15 for Grades 1–4, 20 for Grades 5–7	No maximum class size; classrooms are large enough to ensure 1–2 meter (3–6 feet) separation	No maximum class size; students in stable homerooms; subject-matter teachers move between classes
Classroom space/ physical distancing	Group desks broken up; some use dividers	Physical distancing (2 meters) within classrooms; use of outdoor space, gyms, and secondary school classrooms	Physical distancing within classrooms; use of outdoor space encouraged	Group desks broken up in Grade 3 and up; 1–2 meter (3–6 feet) distance maintained	Group desks broken up; some use dividers
Arrival procedures	Designated routes to classes; multiple entrances	No family members past entry; staggered arrival/ dismissal	No family members past entry; staggered arrival/ dismissal	No family members past entry; parents report travel; staggered arrival/ dismissal	No family members past entry
Mealtimes	Eat at desks or, if cafeteria used, seating is assigned in homeroom groups	Sit well apart while eating; no shared food	Eat at desks or, if cafeteria used, homeroom groups enter in shifts	Assigned seating in cafeteria with 1–2 meter (3–6 feet) spacing	Eat at desks; some use dividers
Recreation	Some schools have suspended physical education	Students play outside as much as possible; play limited to small groups within homeroom	Students sent outside as much as possible; play limited to small groups; outdoor space divided and use is staggered	Inter-school sports suspended; small-group play time staggered	Sports and physical education suspended
Transport	Using "customized school buses" with seats farther apart to limit proximity	School buses allowed; only one student per row	Private transportation encouraged; one student per row on buses	Still running buses and public transit	Still running buses and public transit, cleaning at least every 8 hours
Hygiene	Masks required, provided by the government; frequent handwashing	Frequent handwashing; posters and videos provided	Staff training on hygiene standards; frequent handwashing; posters and videos provided	Frequent handwashing; posters and videos provided	Masks required, provided by the government; windows and air vents left open
Cleaning	Guidance for cleaning, disinfecting, and waste disposal	Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting; government provides cleaner, thermometers	Guidance for frequent and thorough cleaning; disinfecting not required; students help clean	Common areas cleaned frequently (e.g., every 2 hours); students help clean	Detailed guidance for cleaning and disinfecting common areas

SOURCE: *Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines From Other Countries* by Hanna Melnick and Linda Darling-Hammond, with the assistance of Melanie Leung, Cathy Yun, Abby Schachner, Sara Plasencia, and Naomi Ondrasek is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

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6

Recommendations and Urgent Research

Whether to reopen school buildings for the 2020–2021 school year is one of the most consequential and complex decisions many education leaders will ever have to make. While the benefits of reopening for students, families, and communities are clear, leaders must also take into account the health risks to school personnel and students' families, as well as the practicality and cost of the mitigation strategies that will be needed to operate safely. These decisions are made more difficult by the lack of definitive evidence about transmission in children or about which mitigation measures are most effective for limiting the spread of the virus in schools.

Recognizing these challenges and the difficult choices faced by education leaders, the committee offers a set of eight recommendations intended both to provide guidance as leaders make these choices and to serve as a call to action for other stakeholders to provide support for educators in this difficult time. We also offer an ninth recommendation identifying four areas of research we believe need urgent attention so that decision-makers can soon have the evidence base they need for making more informed choices.

Recommendation 1: *The Decision to Reopen*

Districts should weigh the relative health risks of reopening against the educational risks of providing no in-person instruction in Fall 2020. Given the importance of in-person interaction for learning and development, districts should prioritize reopening with an emphasis on providing full-time, in-person instruction in grades K-5 and for students with special needs who would be best served by in-person instruction.

A complex set of risks and trade-offs surrounds decisions about reopening school buildings. Reopening schools for in-person learning will necessarily bring a number of risks related to health and safety. Not reopening schools, however, also carries a number of risks that

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need to be considered. Distance learning, while an essential tool for ensuring continuity of instruction when school buildings are closed, cannot fully take the place of in-person interaction. Moreover, disparities in access to reliable internet and appropriate electronic devices could compound already existing educational inequities. The risks of not having face-to-face learning are especially high for young children, who may suffer long-term consequences academically if they fall behind in the early grades.

Recommendation 2: ***Precautions for Reopening***

To reopen during the pandemic, schools and districts should provide surgical masks for all teachers and staff, as well as supplies for effective hand hygiene for all people who enter school buildings.

In order to open for in-person learning, schools and districts will need to leverage the strengths and talents of teachers and school staff by attending to their health and safety concerns. As discussed in chapter 3, a significant portion of the teacher workforce is over the age of 65, signaling that these individuals are both at increased risk related to COVID-19, *and* eligible for retirement. This reality, combined with the fact that many schools and districts may choose to limit interaction among students by assigning students to smaller cohorts or pods, poses a serious human capital challenge for education stakeholders to consider. To make returning to work a safe and desirable option, stakeholders will need to take the health and safety concerns of teachers and staff seriously.

Recommendation 3: ***Partnerships Between School Districts and Public Health Officials***

Local public health officials should partner with districts to

- **assess the readiness of school facilities to ensure that they meet the minimum health and safety standards necessary to support COVID-19 mitigation strategies;**
- **consult on proposed plans for mitigating the spread of COVID-19;**
- **develop a protocol for monitoring data on the virus in order to (a) track community spread and (b) make decisions about changes to the mitigation strategies in place in schools and when future full school closures might be necessary;**

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- **participate in shared decision-making about when it is necessary to initiate closure of schools for in-person learning;**
- **design and deliver COVID-19 related prevention and health promotion training to staff, community and students.**

Not only will decisions related to when and how to reopen schools for in-person learning need to reflect a school district's priorities and constraints, but also plans for reopening will need to include careful monitoring of the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. In light of the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding what is known about COVID-19, the committee emphasizes that it is unreasonable to expect school districts to have the requisite in-house public health expertise to make ongoing decisions about reopening and operating schools.

Recommendation 4: ***Access to Public Health Expertise***

States should ensure that in portions of the state where public health offices are short-staffed or lack personnel with expertise in infectious disease, districts have access to the ongoing support from public health officials that is needed to monitor and maintain the health of students and staff.

Not all school districts will be able to immediately access the appropriate public health expertise locally. In many parts of the United States, especially rural areas, public health offices may be short-staffed or may lack staff with deep expertise in infectious disease. Yet public health expertise is necessary for making the myriad ongoing decisions described in this report, and it is incumbent upon states to ensure that this need is addressed.

Recommendation 5: ***Decision-making Coalitions***

State and local decision-makers and education leaders should develop a mechanism, such as a local task force, that allows for input from representatives of school staff, families, local health officials, and other community interests to inform decisions related to reopening schools. Such a cross-sector task force should

- **determine educational priorities and community values related to opening schools;**

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- **be explicit about financial, staffing, and facilities-related constraints;**
- **determine a plan for informing ongoing decisions about schools;**
- **establish a plan for communication; and**
- **liaise with communities to advocate for needed resources.**

While public health expertise is a critical component of making smart decisions related to reopening schools, it is just one perspective necessary for outlining a plan that reflects the needs and priorities of a community. As discussed in Chapter 4, many different stakeholders are invested in K-12 education. In order to approach reopening schools in ways that reflect a community's collective values, it is critical that state and local decision-makers engage a range of different constituencies in the process of delineating a plan for reopening schools and monitoring their ongoing safety.

Recommendation 6: *Equity in Reopening*

In developing plans for reopening schools and implementing mitigation strategies, districts should take into account exisiting disparities within and across schools. Across schools, plans need to address disparities in school facilities, staffing shortages, overcrowding, and remote learning infrastructures. Within schools, plans should address disparities in resources for students and families. These issues might include access to technology, health care services, ability to provide masks for students, and other considerations.

As this report discusses throughout, decisions around reopening schools are occurring in the context of a deeply inequitable public school system. Unless school districts directly address equity in their planning process, reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly exacerbate existing disparities in educational access and outcomes. As part of the planning process, districts will need to understand how existing inequities (in school facilities, staffing, access to resources, etc.) are likely to interact with the lived realities of communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19, so that the plans can identify where additional resources or special considerations are necessary.

Recommendation 7: *Addressing Financial Burdens for Schools and Districts*

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Schools will not be able to take on the entire financial burden of implementing the mitigation strategies. Federal and state governments should provide significant resources to districts and schools to enable them to implement the suite of measures required to maintain individual and community health and allow schools to remain open. Under-resourced districts with aging facilities in poor condition will need additional financial support to bring facilities to basic health and safety standards. In addition, state departments of education should not penalize schools by withholding state-wide school funding formula monies for student absences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The various strategies for mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 reviewed in Chapter 5 will be the primary tools used by schools to support the health of their staff and students as they reopen school buildings. This list of strategies is long and complex, and implementing them will require a substantial investment of financial and human capital resources. These considerable expenditures are coming at a time when many districts are looking at uncertain financial futures as a result of the pandemic. While the size of the funding shortfall will depend on how well resourced a school district is, many districts will be unable to afford implementing the entire suite of mitigation measures, potentially leaving students and staff in those districts at greater risk of infection. In the absence of substantial financial support from the federal government and state governments, it is likely that the communities most impacted by COVID-19 will see even worse health outcomes in the wake of reopening schools.

As noted throughout this report, districts within the same state are likely to have significantly different resources (financial, human capital, etc.) to put towards reopening schools. States will need to have a role in ensuring an equitable distribution of resources so that districts can implement the measures required for a strategic reopening in their local contexts. Further, in order to equitably support districts and schools, states should not withhold funds or otherwise penalize districts if families choose remote or distance learning options for their children in Fall 2020.

Recommendation 8: ***High-Priority Mitigation Strategies***

Based on what is currently known about the spread of COVID-19, districts should prioritize mask wearing, providing healthy hand hygiene solutions, physical distancing,

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and limiting large gatherings. Cleaning, ventilation, and air filtration are also important, but attending to those strategies alone will not sufficiently lower the risk of transmission. Creating small cohorts of students is another promising strategy.

Although it is impossible to eliminate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in schools completely, the mitigation strategies recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and described in this report are showing promise for reducing transmission when implemented effectively. The lack of evidence about the relative effectiveness of different strategies, especially given the considerable costs involved in implementing them all, is a challenge for districts and schools, which are left largely on their own to prioritize which of the mitigation strategies to implement and how to make judgments about any necessary modifications due to practical constraints. The committee drew on its collective expertise and the limited available evidence to identify a few mitigation strategies that appear to show promise for districts looking to leverage limited resources.

Recommendation 9*: Urgent Research*

The research community should immediately conduct research that will provide the evidence needed to make informed decisions about school reopening and safe operation. The most urgent areas for inquiry are

- **children and transmission of COVID-19,**
- **the role of reopening schools in contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in communities,**
- **the role of airborne transmission of COVID-19, and**
- **the effectiveness of mitigation strategies.**

Children and Transmission of COVID-19

The fact that as of this writing there was no scientific consensus on the role of children in transmitting COVID-19—to one another or to adults—poses a serious challenge for decision-makers. Although it is known that children are less likely both to contract COVID-19 and to

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experience significant consequences if they do, it is simply impossible to ascertain how likely children are to transmit the disease to school staff or adults at home. Clarity on this point would offer much-needed guidance for decision-makers regarding the necessity of various mitigation measures, and could potentially alleviate considerable anxiety for adults in proximity to students slated to attend school in person. Therefore, research is urgently needed to help understand the role of children in transmitting COVID-19.

The Role of Reopening Schools in Contributing to the Spread of COVID-19 in Communities

In addition to uncertainty around the role of children in transmitting COVID-19, much of the anxiety around reopening schools relates to how schools as a large gathering place for individuals will factor into the spread of COVID-19 in a community. To date, research on this question has produced mixed results (Hsiang et al., 2020). Clarity in this area could provide further insight into what kinds of mitigation strategies might be of the highest priority for schools. As a result, research is urgently needed that looks specifically at how the reopening of schools matters (or does not) for the prevalence of COVID-19.

The Role of Airborne Transmission of COVID-19

In the process of writing this report, the committee repeatedly returned to conversations around the role of airborne transmission of COVID-19. As described in Chapter 3, indoor air quality in U.S. public schools is notoriously poor, which can have innumerable deleterious health impacts on students and staff. However, because there is not yet scientific consensus on the role of airborne transmission in the spread of the virus, it is also unclear how the indoor air quality of schools matters in the spread of COVID-19. Given the considerable cost associated with updating aging facilities, it is particularly important to understand the exact role of airborne transmission such that stakeholders can assess the relative value and utility of that investment.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Strategies

Although this committee was expressly tasked with assessing the effectiveness and practicality of the various mitigation strategies intended to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, we were repeatedly thwarted in that endeavor by the lack of clarifying evidence. If this committee of experts was unable to reach consensus on the best direction for schools, it is likely to be extremely challenging for education stakeholders to navigate the plethora of guidance documents to determine what is best for their schools and district. Research on the effectiveness

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of mitigation strategies and their specific utility in school settings is needed immediately. The committee also suggests that as schools reopen to in-person learning in Fall 2020, researchers leverage the occasion to conduct research in real time, and provide guidance as soon as it becomes available.

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Epilogue

The committee completed this report against the backdrop of a nation responding to the multiple deaths of Black people from police violence. In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals of all races took to the streets in protest, demanding accountability for a broken system. Although this committee was not tasked with commenting on issues around racial justice, it is impossible to make recommendations related to reopening schools without acknowledging the larger circumstances in which many Black and Indigenous people and communities of color develop distrust of state systems.

It is within this context that the committee grappled with what to recommend to education stakeholders, and we struggled to uncover a number of unarticulated assumptions about what is best for children. In the process, we took on a series of challenging questions: What is meant when one discusses the physical and emotional safety of K-12 students? What is the role and value of schools in communities? If the United States moves to reopen schools in fall 2020, who will truly bear the risks of this pandemic, and what does that mean for different kinds of communities across the country?

The reality, of course, is that the answers to these questions largely depend on the values and priorities of the asker. As Dr. Megan Bang of Northwestern University said in her presentation to the committee, the conclusions one draws about the evidence before them are never neutral. The logic used in deciding when and how to reopen schools reflects values and assumptions, both of which are historically situated and subject to visible and invisible power dynamics. Moreover, those values and assumptions are legible to the communities of people who go to, work at, and send their children to schools. When policymakers leave those values and assumptions uninterrogated in the face of systemic racism, they tend to crystallize into policy that reproduces pernicious deficit ideologies about communities of color. In essence, race and class *matter* in every aspect of these decisions, regardless of whether decision makers acknowledge them.

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As the nation struggles to find a road to recovery in the face of the twin challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the epidemic of systemic racism, there are no easy answers, no quick and affordable policy decisions that will enable children to reenter schools safely while simultaneously addressing the profound systemic inequities this moment in time has laid bare. Addressing these challenges will require the coordinated and concerted efforts of all sectors in the United States. It will require commitments to equitable school financing, to engaging communities in the complicated and emotional decision-making related to reopening schools, and to centering equity in the discussions that surround those decisions.

Amid all these discourses, though, the committee sees an opportunity to use this moment as way forward in U.S. schooling. Communities across the country have a chance to consider explicitly their expectations for what roles schools should serve and to reopen schools in accordance with those priorities. Beyond the necessary investments from federal and state governments, school districts can be positioned to engage deliberately with students, families, staff, and other community interests, taking seriously their expressed needs, hopes, anxieties, and goals. With careful consideration and commitments, this can be a moment to do more than simply reopen the doors to U.S. schools; it can also be a moment to reimagine their possibilities.

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CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 2

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Appendix A

The Committee's Review of Existing Evidence

As described in Chapter 1, evidence around the spread, mitigation, and treatment of COVID-19 is continuously emerging. Given this rapidly changing understanding of COVID-19, committee members relied heavily on their collective expert judgment in interpreting the available evidence. They also leveraged existing bodies of research—for example, on child development and schooling—to draw conclusions in areas where research specific to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is sparse or does not exist (such as research on the effects on socioemotional development of a sudden and long-term switch to solely virtual learning).

When reaching conclusions and developing recommendations, the committee drew on multiple streams of evidence: expert oral testimony was weighed alongside published literature as much as possible. However, it is important to acknowledge that, at the time of publication, many critical pieces of the COVID-19 puzzle are still missing. For example, there is still an incomplete picture of whether children—particularly those who are infected but without symptoms—can efficiently transmit the virus to others. Throughout this report, we have attempted to provide as much clarity as possible to the logic undergirding our conclusions and recommendations, as well as to identify additional research needs. The committee also solicited expert feedback on the effectiveness of strategies for mitigating COVID-19 in K-12 schools.

In order to obtain the evidence necessary to complete our review, the committee held three open sessions with experts from relevant areas of research. In the first open session, we heard testimony from Dr. Karen Bierman of the Pennsylvania State University, who discussed child development in responding to COVID-19. We also heard from Dr. Barbara Means, the Executive Director of Digital Promise, who addressed the potential and limitations of virtual learning. Dr. Michael Portman of Seattle Children's Hospital discussed the impact of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, and environmental science advisor Jerry

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Roseman discussed concerns around school facilities. We concluded the first open session meeting with a discussion with Dr. Stephen Pruitt, president of the Southern Regional Education Board, who offered perspective on how state leaders are making decisions related to school reopening.

At the second open session, the committee heard testimony on centering equity in addressing school reopening from Dr. Megan Bang of Northwestern University and the Spencer Foundation. Dr. Nancy Hill from Harvard University discussed the importance of engaging communities in school reopening decisions and plans. Dr. Lauren Ancel-Meyers of the University of Texas at Austin described her work modeling SARS-CoV-2 transmission, as well as her collaboration with the city of Austin to determine a framework for making decisions about when and how to reopen schools and businesses. Following the final committee meeting, we held one additional conversation with Dr. Linsey Marr of Virginia Tech, who consulted on indoor air quality and how schools should consider mitigating the transmission of SARS-CoV-2. The contributions of these experts were critical to helping the committee understand and respond to the breadth of challenges facing education stakeholders as they make decisions related to reopening schools.

In order to fully understand the long and complex list of strategies schools might use to assist in reducing transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the committee also sought input from epidemiologists and infectious disease prevention doctors. The committee asked a list of thirty experts to reflect on which mitigation strategies were most important for use in K-12 schools, and which were least useful. The committee incorporated this feedback into its analysis of how schools should prioritize and deploy mitigation strategies.

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Appendix B

Guidance Documents Collected by the Committee

Federal Government	
Source	**Title**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	*CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again*
CDC	*Cases Data, and Surveillance*
CDC	*Considerations for Schools*
CDC	*Considerations for K-12 Schools: Readiness and Planning Tool*
CDC	*COVIDView Weekly Summary*
CDC	*General Business Frequently Asked Questions*
CDC	*Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for SARS-CoV-2 Testing*
CDC	*Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*
CDC	*People Who are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness*
CDC	*Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Hones*
CDC	*Schools and Childcare: Checklist for Parents*
CDC	*Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Decision Tree)*
State Governments	
Source	**Title**
Alabama State Department of Education	*P-12 Supportive Guidance: Phase 3 Beginning June 1, 2020*
Alabama State Department of Education	*Checklist and Guidance for School-Sponsored Activities*
Arizona Department of Education	*Roadmap for Reopening Schools: June 2020*

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California Department of Public Health	*COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Programs*
California Department of Education	*Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools*
Colorado Department of Education	*Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year: A Framework and Toolkit for School and District Leaders*
Florida Association of District School Superintendents	*K12 Return to School Recommended Guidelines*
Florida Department of Education	*Reopening Florida's Schools and the CARES Act: Closing Achievement Gaps and Creating Safe Spaces for Learning*
Georgia Department of Education	*Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools*
Hawaii State Department of Education	*Guidance for Reopening Schools*
Indiana State Department of Health; Indiana Department of Education	*Indiana's Consideration for Learning and Safe Schools In-Class: COVID-19 Health and Safety Re-entry Guidance*
Kentucky Department of Education	*COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools Initial Guidance for Schools and Districts*
Maryland State Department of Education	*Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education*
State of Montana Office of Public Instruction	*School Re-entry & Recovery after a Pandemic Event*
New Jersey School Boards Association	*Searching for a "New Normal" in New Jersey's Public Schools*
Pennsylvania Department of Education	*Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools*
Virginia Department of Education	*Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools*
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	*Reopening Washington Schools 2020: District Planning Guide*
Counties	
Source	**Title**
Fairfax County Public Schools (VA)	*FCPS Reopening of Schools: Draft Plans for Fall 2020*
Sacramento County Office of Education (CA)	*School Year Planning: A Guide to Address the Challenges of COVID-19*
Organizations	
Source	**Title**
American Academy of Pediatrics	*COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Return to In-Person Education in Schools*

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American Academy of Pediatrics	*COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry*
American Enterprise Institute	*A Blueprint for Back to School*
The Aspen Institute Education and Society Program	*Recovery and Renewal: Principles for Advancing Public Education Post-Crisis*
American Federation of Teachers	*A Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities*
The Brookings Institution	*Reopening schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic: Your questions, our answers*
The Brookings Institution	*COVID-19 and school closures: What can countries learn from past emergencies?*
Collaborative For Academic, Social, And Emotional Learning (CASEL)	*An Initial Guide to Leveraging the Power of Social and Emotional Learning*
Council of Chief State School Officers	*COVID-19 Response: Phase 2 Restart & Recovery*
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health	*Healthy Schools: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools*
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Health Security	*Filling in the Blanks: National Research Needs to Guide Decisions about Reopening Schools in the United States*
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Health Security	*Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors*
Learning Policy Institute	*Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from Other Countries*
National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)	*Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Schools*
OECD	*A Framework to Guide an Education Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020*
Southern Regional Education Board	*Enhance or Establish a Local Task Force*
Southern Regional Education Board	*Funding*
Southern Regional Education Board	*Make Decisions for Calendars and Daily Schedules*
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Health Organization (WHO); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	*Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools*
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),	*Framework for Reopening Schools*

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UNICEF, The World Bank, World Food Programme	
WHO	*Considerations for School-Related Public Health Measures in the Context of COVID-19*
Equity Considerations	
Source	**Title**
Alliance for Excellent Education	*Coronavirus and the Classroom: Recommendations for Prioritizing Equity in the Response to COVID-19*
Digital Promise; The Education Trust	*With Schools Closed and Distance Learning the Norm, How is your District Meeting the Needs of its Students: 10 Questions for Equity Advocates to Ask*
The Education Trust	*Five Things State Leaders Should Do to Ensure Students have Equitable Access to Learning Opportunities during COVID-19 School Closures*
Southern Education Foundation	*Distance Learning during COVID-19: 7 Equity Considerations for Schools and Districts*
Urban Institute	*Mapping Student Needs during COVID-19: An Assessment of Remote Learning Environments*
Facilities Resources	
Source	**Title**
CDC	*Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities: Interim Recommendations for U.S. Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*
New York Department of Health	*Interim Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19*
Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center	*Disabilities and Functional/Access Needs Integration Resources*
REMS TA Center	*Incorporating Infectious Disease Planning Resources*
U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency	*Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response*
U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	*Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19*
Washington State Department of Health	*Classroom Cleaning Tips for Teachers*
Journal Publications and News Articles	
Source	**Title**

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Analytical Chemistry	*Cognitive and Human Factors in Expert Decision Making: Six Fallacies and the Eight Sources of Bias*
Health Affairs	*Strong Social Distancing Measures in the United States Reduced the COVID-19 Growth Rate*
JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association	*The Urgency and Challenge of Opening K-12 Schools in the Fall of 2020*
The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health	*Screen time in children and adolescents: is there evidence to guide parents and policy?*
Nature Medicine	*Age-dependent effects in the transmission and control of COVID-19 epidemics*
The New York Times	*Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History*
The New York Times	*When 511 Epidemiologists Expect to Fly, Hug, and Do 18 Other Everyday Activities Again*

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Appendix C

Example District Plans for Reopening Schools

As plans for reopening schools are finalized, it is clear that schools are unlikely to operate as they had prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of publication, the following school districts had issued plans for reopening schools in Fall 2020. These plans vary on a number of issues including, among others, the role of families in the decision-making process and the availability of different educational options for students and families.

Fairfax County Public Schools (VA)

Students will be returning to schools in August, and parents have already received an enrollment letter to choose how their children will go to the school for the entire year. Parents and families must submit their choices by July 10, 2020. The first option is full time online instruction for the year with four days of teacher-directed instruction and one day of independent learning. Elementary students will receive 2.5-3.5 hours of direct instruction, while middle and high schools would attend eight periods daily. The second option is that students can attend schools in-person for at least two days per week and engage in independent study on days they are not in schools. If families do not submit their enrollment choice by July 10th, their students will automatically be enrolled for in-person instruction (FCPS Plan for Return to School, 2020).

Washington County Schools (TN)

Schools are opening on August 3, 2020, and the county has three options to choose from when reopening. The availability of these options will depend on the rate of positive cases and what the local health department recommends at the time of reopening. The first option is a full reopening of schools with all students and staff present. This will only be approved if health officials report a flat or declining rate of cases AND recommend a full reopening. The second option is a staggered schedule where about 25% of students and all staff members will be present in school at one given time. Students will be present for full instruction in schools one day a

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week and will be given the necessary technology like Chromebooks to complete independent study at home. The third option is entirely virtual, where no students are physically present in schools, but professional staff are present during regular school hours. Students will have two different learning platforms available depending on their grade level for active instruction, five days a week. Teachers are in their classroom and available to their students electronically during the day through multiple digital platforms. All students will be assigned an email address for the school year which will be their primary form of communication. Parents and families will be able to communicate with schools through group texts, notifications from school and teacher approved digital applications, and the county website (WCDE School Reopening Plan, 2020).

The School District of Osceola County (FL)

Schools are opening on August 10, 2020, and parents must choose between three options on how their children will attend school by July 15, 2020. The first option is a return to in-person learning. Students will commit to following safety guidelines outlined by the district, and to following the appropriate physical distancing measures. The second option is digital learning with the student's assigned school. Students will follow the traditional schedule at home with live and recorded sessions. Students may have the option to return to in-person instruction if a vaccine becomes available or conditions improve. The third option is enrolling with Osceola Virtual School, where students will engage in full-time independent learning online and also have the option to work during non-traditional school hours (Osceola *Ready. Set. Start Smart!*, 2020).

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Appendix D

Biographical Sketches of Committee Members and Staff

ENRIQUETA BOND (*Chair*) is a founding partner QE Philanthropic Advisors, which provides consulting services for philanthropic and nonprofit organizations on program development and governance. She previously served as president of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, a private foundation whose mission is to advance the medical sciences through the support of research and education. Prior to her role at Burroughs Wellcome, she served as a staff officer, division director, and executive officer at the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine). She has served on the board of the Research Triangle Park Foundation, the National Institute for Statistical Sciences, the Northeast Biodefense Center, and the New England Center of Excellence in Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases. She is a member of the council of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and she has served as the vice chair of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Center for Infectious Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and as the chair of the Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She has an A.B. from Wellesley College, an M.A. from the University of Virginia, and a Ph.D. in genetics and molecular biology from Georgetown University.

DIMITRI CHRISTAKIS is the George Adkins professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine, director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children's Research Institute, and an attending pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital. With support from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and numerous foundations, his laboratory focuses on the effects of environmental influences on children's health. His goal is to develop actionable strategies to optimize children's

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cognitive, social, and emotional development. That work has taken him from the examination room to the community and, most recently, to the cages of newborn mice. He is the author of more than 230 original research articles, a textbook of pediatrics, and *The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids*. He is a recipient of the Academic Pediatric Association Research Award for outstanding contributions to pediatric research over his career. He has an M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and an M.P.H. from the University of Washington School of Public Health.

KENNE DIBNER (*Study Director*) is a senior program officer with the Board on Science Education at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. She has served as study director for *Learning Through Citizen Science: Enhancing Opportunities by Design* and *Science Literacy: Concepts, Contexts, and Consequences,* as well as a recently completed assessment of NASA's Science Mission Directorate's education portfolio. Prior to this position, she worked as a research associate at Policy Studies Associates, Inc., where she conducted evaluations of education policies and programs for government agencies, foundations, and school districts, including an evaluation of a partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Indian Education to provide citizen science programming to tribal youth. She has also served as a research consultant with the Center on Education Policy. She has a B.A in English literature from Skidmore College and a Ph.D. in education policy from Michigan State University.

LETICIA GARCILAZO GREEN is a research associate for the Board on Science Education at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. As a member of the board staff, she has supported studies focusing on criminal justice, science education, and climate change. Prior to joining the National Academies, she worked as a legal assistant with a law firm that specialized in security clearances and white-collar crime in Washington, D.C. She has a B.S. in psychology and a B.A. in sociology with a concentration in criminology from Louisiana State University and an M.A. in forensic psychology from The George Washington University.

MICHAEL LACH is the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at Township High School District 113, a small district north of Chicago. Prior to this position, he served as the director of STEM education and strategic initiatives at UChicago STEM Education.

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He also previously served as an administrator with the Chicago Public Schools, including as chief officer of teaching and learning, overseeing curriculum and instruction in 600+ schools. During the Obama Administration, he led science and mathematics education efforts at the U.S. Department of Education. He began his teaching career teaching as a charter member of Teach for America and subsequently joined the national office of Teach for America as Director of Program Design, developing a portfolio-based alternative-certification system that was adopted by several states. In 1995, he was named one of Radio Shack's top 100 technology teachers, and he is a recipient of the Illinois Physics Teacher of the Year award. He has served as an Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow, advising Congressman Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) on science, technology, and education issues. He has a B.A. degree in physics from Carleton College, M.A. degrees from Columbia University and Northeastern Illinois University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

PHYLLIS D. MEADOWS is a senior fellow in the health program of The Kresge Foundation, where she advises the health team on the development of its overall strategic direction and provides leadership in the design and implementation of grantmaking initiatives and projects. She has led the foundation's Emerging Leaders and Public Health Program and advises and supports the development of cross-team programming efforts with the Detroit Environment and Human Services Programs. She is the former associate dean for practice at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health and a clinical professor in health management and policy. Her work in public health includes serving as deputy director and then director/public health officer for the city of Detroit. She has served as adjunct faculty with the School of Nursing at both Wayne State University and Oakland University. She also previously worked at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as a program director for children and youth in education and higher education and for communities both nationally and internationally. She has a B.S.N. from Oakland University and an M.A. in community health nursing and a Ph.D. in applied sociology from Wayne State University.

KATHLEEN MOORE, the principal owner of Kathleen Moore and Associates, provides consulting services to local educational agencies throughout California. Those services cover a wide range, including educational planning, maximizing and leveraging funding, facility program management, and master plan development and implementation. Prior to starting

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Kathleen Moore and Associates, she was the director of the School Facilities and Transportation Services Division with the California Department of Education. In this role, she directed a staff of 40 and was responsible for the annual approval of more than 100 school sites and 400 school design plans for public school projects in California. She also provided leadership and policy development to ensure California's K-12 school facilities support student learning, achievement, and workforce development. She has a B.A. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.P.A. from the University of San Francisco.

CAITLIN RIVERS is a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Health and Engineering at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her research focuses on improving public health preparedness and response. She has participated as author or contributor to major reports that are guiding the U.S. response to COVID-19, including *National Coronavirus Response: A Roadmap to Reopening*; *A National COVID-19 Surveillance System: Achieving Containment*; *Filling in the Blanks: National Research Needs to Guide Decisions about Reopening Schools in the United States*; and *A National Plan to Enable Comprehensive COVID-19 Case Finding and Contact Tracing in the US*. She is the lead author on *Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors*, a report that is being used by the National Governors Association, the state of Maryland, and the District of Columbia to guide reopening plans. She recently testified to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies on the COVID-19 response. She has a Ph.D. in bioinformatics and computational biology from Virginia Tech.

KEISHA SCARLETT is the chief of equity, partnerships, and engagement with Seattle Public Schools. In this cabinet-level role, she oversees all racial equity initiatives and capacity building of staff, family partnerships, community partnerships, community engagement, and strategic oversight of high visibility, cross-organizational partnerships and philanthropic relationships. She has previously served in multiple school administration roles, ranging from STEM (science technology, engineering, and mathematics) teacher to school leader to district administrator. She is a recipient of the Middle Level Washington State Principal of the Year. She has an Ed.D. from the University of Washington.

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NATHANIEL SCHWARTZ is a professor of practice at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. He leads Annenberg's efforts to develop local partnerships that directly improve the quality of schools and experiences of students while producing nationally relevant research. He was previously the chief research and strategy officer for the Tennessee Department of Education. In that role, he led the department's research and strategic planning teams, contributing to the launch of Tennessee Succeeds, a strategic plan and vision aimed at increasing postsecondary and career readiness for Tennessee's 1 million students, and to the creation of the Tennessee Education Research Alliance, an innovative state-level research partnership with Vanderbilt University. He earlier worked as a high school science teacher in Illinois and Arkansas. He has a B.A. from Harvard College and an M.P.P. and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

HEIDI SCHWEINGRUBER (*Board Director*) is the director of the Board on Science Education at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. She has served as study director or co-study director for a wide range of studies, including those on revising national standards for K-12 science education, learning and teaching science in grades K-8, and mathematics learning in early childhood. She also coauthored two award-winning books for practitioners that translate the findings of National Academies' reports for a broader audience, one on using research in K-8 science classrooms and one on information science education. Prior to joining the National Academies, she worked as a senior research associate at the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education. She also served on the faculty of Rice University and as the director of research for the Rice University School Mathematics Project, an outreach program in K-12 mathematics education. She has a Ph.D. in psychology (developmental) and anthropology and a certificate in culture and cognition, both from the University of Michigan.

JEFFREY M. VINCENT is a director and cofounder of the Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley. His research and publications cover a variety of issues, including school infrastructure planning, school siting and design, sustainable communities, community development, educational economics, housing policy, state school construction policies, joint use of schools, youth engagement in redevelopment, refugee resettlement, and

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transportation policy. His work reflects two key ideas: that finding policy answers requires new modes of scholarship that draw on a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and that it requires collaborative work between the too-often-siloed public, nonprofit, and private sectors. Much of his work involves "engaged scholarship," done for and in partnership with public agencies, nonprofit organizations and others with public interests in mind. He is an instructor and graduate student mentor in the university's PLUS Fellows Program. He is a recipient of the Berkeley Chancellor's Award for Public Service, Research in the Public Interest. He has a Ph.D. in city and regional planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

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

Testimony opposing agenda item G

Melissa Keenan <melissaannkeenan@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 1:27 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Liberty Furchgott <liberty.furchgott@k12.hi.us>

Testimony opposing agenda item G
From:
Melissa Keenan
Honokaa High and Intermediate School
Science Department chairperson/teacher
Special education teacher

Shortage differentials are critical to attracting and retaining qualified teachers in hard to staff positions and locations (for which we still have a shortage in our state). In a rural school, such as where I teach in Honokaa, teacher turnover has been an issue historically. The differential pay allows a single mom like myself to earn a living wage without a second and third and fourth job (many teachers must work multiple jobs to afford to live in Hawaii). Hawaii teachers are very underpaid compared to the rest of the country.... Now we are being asked to return to the workplace in person every day with zero reduction in our possible exposure to a very dangerous and very contagious virus that has infected millions and has already killed over 600,000 people this year with no signs of slowing its rate of infection in our country. We are asked to find childcare for our school-aged children for three out of five days while we continue to be on the front lines- providing both in-person instruction AND online instruction AT THE SAME TIME. This is getting two teachers for the price of one- we are doing our jobs and going over and above what's normally required of us- yet our salaries are first on the chopping block???

In January, when we first began receiving our differential pay, I could finally breathe. I wasn't living paycheck to paycheck, going further into debt every month. I thought, maybe I can keep teaching as my career. My salary isn't so embarrassing now. Prior to that news, I knew I needed to change careers because my salary was just not enough to keep house and home as a single mother of two young children. Either that or move to the mainland where the cost of living is lower. Hawaii has one of the highest costs of living in the country and relative to that high cost of living, we are the lowest paid teachers in the country. How can we attract and retain good teachers in our state, you ask? There is only one answer: pay them a livable wage. Teachers in Hawaii are paid, on average just over $61,000 a year, which means teachers are typically taking home approximately $3500 (net) a month. In this area, housing costs are on average $1700 a month, childcare for one child is already $1800 a month (so as a single mother-if these are averages, then you have zero dollars remaining for food and essentials, electric, internet, phone, etc., after paying for just housing and childcare). Additionally, now many teachers will have increased childcare costs because we are required to report to a worksite daily and our children will need to be cared for since they are attending school only two days a week now. This is a significant increase in many teachers' cost of living, and the last thing any teacher needs right now is a pay cut. Discontinuing our pay differentials is a pay cut. I urge the Board to continue the already-approved critical payments many of us need in order to continue in the profession without going into personal debt. Cutting these payments will significantly negatively impact the retention of our teachers in hard-to-staff positions and locations.

It isn't known yet how many teachers will not be returning to work because they've calculated their risk of COVID to be too high for their salary, and by discontinuing the crucial differential pay, we will certainly be losing even more. Hawaii's keiki CANNOT AFFORD to lose more good teachers. You may think that Hawaii cannot afford to continue the shortage differentials but the opposite is true: Hawaii can not afford to discontinue shortage differentials. The consequences to our teachers, our keiki, and our rural communities are too high.

Mahalo
Melissa Keenan

Sent from my iPhone

Differential Testimony

Christopher Mione <christopher.mione@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 1:30 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I have worked at Honokaa High & Intermediate School for twelve years as a special education teacher. This past school year we had some former students come to visit and share about their post high school experiences. A major takeaway for me was so many of the graduates commenting on how many of their former teachers had left the school and how many of the current teachers at the school they did not recognize. The turnover for teachers at Honokaa in just a few years is astonishing and detrimental to students receiving a good education.

The pay differential is necessary to keep equity in hard-to-fill schools and positions. As educators return to the classroom and put their lives and health in danger to teach, a pay cut will be an insult to the teachers who have put in their time and dedication.

Christopher Mione

Honokaa High & Intermediate School

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

Differential

dthomas440@aol.com <dthomas440@aol.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 1:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please continue to fund the hard to staff areas so we teachers can live Hawaii.
Sincerely Donell Thomas

Why do we have to keep doing this?

TESTIMONY

Karen Kramer <krames9@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:23 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,
My name is Karen and I have been a special education teacher in Hawaii for 15 years. The differential pay we receive is essential and much appreciated. Not only do we have more paperwork and late after school meetings, we work in close proximity to our students. At a time like this, I can't see how discontinuing our differential pay is warranted. Due to close proximity needed to address the needs of many of my students, it puts me at a greater risk than some of my colleagues. During Covid19, distance learning, I had IEP meetings and staffings daily, may times after the 3:00 "work day". Not to mention, during the regular school year, many of my IEP meetings go past 4:00 on a weekly basis.
Not only is our regular salary under threat with the governor trying to fill the 1 billion dollar deficit, our differential pay under threat too. How do you expect teachers, let alone special education teachers and hard to fill positions to make it here in Hawaii??? I already work a 2nd job and have had to work that second job since I started teaching here. Please continue to help us and support us by continuing to provide the differential pay.

Thanks for your time and consideration,
Karen

Gmail

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

Pay Differentials

Monica Wilfong <monica.wilfong@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please retain our pay differential! It is essential for my family to have this as my husband is currently furloughed and our future is uncertain. It is imperative we have these funds to help support our family during these troubling times. This will be my 13th year working for the DOE. I have been through furloughs and cuts. This pay differential is more essential than ever. I humbly implore you to retain our pay differential. It will make a huge difference to my family either way. I pray you'll choose to keep it. Thank you.

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

Testimony

Eric Kaneshiro <ekaneshiro@kawaihonapcs.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony in regards to item G.

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing today about the special education differential.
I am a special education teacher at Kawaihona PCS. I find the timing of the proposal to eliminate the differential appaling. Many teachers have made the crossover from general education to special education based on this proposal. Many have also moved to a hard to staff school based on the proposed differential. By deferring the differentials now, seems almost like changing the rules of the game at halftime. What message does it send to these teachers who read a written document approved by the DOE and the BOE and decided to move to special education or a hard to staff school.

I humbly ask you to follow through with your promised differential for this year and perhaps take it away next year.

Mahalo,
Eric Kaneshiro

Gmail

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

Action Item G: Board Action on Differentials

Marilyn Rodgers <marodgers@kamaile.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:29 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

History: I have read memos from our Superintendent, Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, to the Board of Education about the Board's action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am alarmed, and feel compelled to express my dismay as **not funding the differentials will directly and negatively effect me, my colleagues, families, and students here in Waianae.** We experience firsthand how licensed teachers are hard to come by, transfers here in these three areas are scarce, new hires are difficult to find, and our retention rate is low, as a result of competitive and commensurate pay given elsewhere.

We know that the economy and circumstances due to Covid-19 have challenged the budget everywhere. **Teachers here have been working full time during last quarter, and we are expected to be in the classroom starting next week in preparation for students for the 2020-21 School Year. We are taking a risk,** have to keep going, and we struggle to understand how we are going to carry on with you.

With the differential in place, our teachers felt compensated and appreciated for the additional time and effort it takes to care for our most vulnerable students. In the evenings and weekends we are required to meet to develop IEPs, hold IEPs after school with families, and implement IEPs with other teachers and students all day long. It has been part of my job for the past 25 years, and as much as I love teaching, **I do not understand how new teachers would be willing to just survive here in Hawaii without these new differentials**.

Why? I have always needed a second income stream, and sometimes even third income stream to provide for my family needs. Hawaii's teacher's salary was inadequate.

Have I filed bankruptcy, yes I have!
Have I had to go into credit card debt, yes I have!
Have I had to sell my home and reduce my expenses, yes I have!
Have I had to use my own money to fund programs I teach in, yes I have!

I urge you to please approve and seek funding for the differentials to support these areas for our most vulnerable students, and for the teachers who are pouring everything into these families to make schools effective for everyone.

Cordially yours,

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)

"E ha'awi na ka mea na'auao, a e 'oi mau ka na'auao; e a'o ho'i i ka mea ho'opono, a e mahuahua a'ela kona 'ike." - Na Solomona 9:9

"Share with a wise person, and he will become wiser. Teach someone righteous, and he will add to his learning" - Smartguys 9:9

Good afternoon members of the Board of Education,

My name is Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser and I'm a special education teacher at Nanaikapono Elementary School. I'm preparing to enter my 29th year as a special education teacher. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.**

I have taught for 24 years in Hawaii, 23 years of which I've been a special education teacher on the Waianae Coast. I have committed to this community and have questioned what incentives were being provided for those of us who have remained committed to serving students with special needs. We've had incentives provided for those who have left special education to get them to come back. We've had incentives for earning National Board Certification. Until January, there were no incentives being offered to those of us who have remained in the classroom as special education teachers. Imagine my feelings of disrespect and devaluation when I saw that the Board was taking up the topic of discontinuing the differentials that we were just granted in January. I'm going back into the classroom next week and will be teaching Kindergarten through second graders with special needs after serving as the SSC for the last two years. This is a tremendous pay cut for me to the tune of $15,000 salary loss. Knowing that I would be getting the differential for being a special education teacher and working in a hard-to-staff school helped me feel better about going back into the classroom because it would even out my financial hit. To hear that you are considering taking those differentials back, if even for this year, is disheartening.

I strongly urge you to reconsider this and keep the differentials in place. Having spent 23 years teaching on the Waianae Coast, I have seen the attrition rate of special education teachers. When I first started at Ma'ili Elementary there were 5 new special education teachers hired. Within three years, I was the only one from that group that remained teaching at the school. Most of them quit and moved back to the Mainland. This attrition rate has continued each year with at least half of the newly hired special education teachers quitting and returning home. For some it was the cost of flying home to visit family. Others moved away because of their spouse's job requirements. Some left to have children. Unfortunately, on the Waianae Coast, there are schools where there are new special education teachers hired each year. At Nanaikapono, we currently have an emergency hire teaching in an inclusion setting. Last year, we had three subs covering special education classes; one of whom was teaching in our medically fragile classroom. These students deserve a knowledgeable, highly qualified, licensed special education teacher providing them with their functional life skills education. Imagine if we had all of our 10 special education positions filled by substitute teachers or emergency hires who have no training in providing specially designed instruction for the nearly 140 students who receive special education services at Nanaikapono?

When looking at the numbers, the intended goal was to get more special education teachers to come back to teaching in a special education line and it worked. More of us are coming back

into the special education classroom. When you see a 29% increase in highly qualified, licensed teachers teaching special education as a result of the differentials, you should not consider rescinding those differentials. Otherwise, you will have these teachers give up and leave that special education position. It definitely makes me reconsider my job and wonder if I should leave the profession and pursue something else where my experience and knowledge is valued. Keeping as many highly qualified, licensed special education teachers in their position should be the goal. Students with special needs are the most vulnerable of all students. If we continue to have a shortage of highly qualified special education teachers, we are doing our students a disservice. The goal is to provide these students with the strategies and skills necessary to become college and career ready. In order to provide the level of instruction that these students need, special education teachers have to provide specially designed instruction that we have taken additional courses on in order to be effective in the classroom. This is additional training that the general education teacher does not have to participate in.

To hear that this is being considered as we are preparing to return to in-person teaching is disrespectful to us as a profession. Here you have us going back to in-person teaching where we are risking, in some cases, our lives or the lives of our family, and now you want to eliminate the differentials is frustrating. If I'm expected to put my life on the line, don't take away additional financial incentives that will help keep more special education teachers in the classroom. I fear that this will result in teachers leaving the special education classroom in greater numbers than before. As someone who often works several jobs at a time, I saw going back into the classroom as an opportunity to maintain my current level of income and be able to stop working my outside jobs. I saw the differentials as a promise from you and the Department of Education finally recognizing those of us who have chosen to stay in, or return to, the classroom with some financial incentive to stay.

I strongly urge you to reconsider this and honor your promise to teachers.

Aloha

I am writing to voice my concerns in regards to the starting of school.

I wish to remain anonymous for fear of retribution but I just want to voice my opinions on this heated discussion of returning to school.

I watched the BOE meeting on July 9. It was quite frustrating to see the Senators voicing their concerns about the starting of school which starts next week because it seemed to fall upon deaf ears of Dr. Kishimoto. She was quite proud of what she has done thus far. She highlighted summer hub and how successful it was. Summer hub was not summer school. Summer hub was for a select number of students (small groups: 6 at my school). That made it very easy to separate and focus on 6 students. She mentioned all the trainings that were provided for teachers. I'd like to know which trainings is she talking about? I know nothing about these trainings. Schools shared their plans with their parents in early July and our MOU had an addendum to include 6' distancing (thankfully) so principals had to change their plans. Does she realize that she's rolling the dice right now? If you believe that we have a solid plan heading into the school year which is set to start next week, you are mistaken. Maybe some schools are confident to start. I'd like to know which schools feel confident. Principals will share what they have come up with, I'm sure, but if you talk to them and really listen, I'm sure they will tell you their fears and concerns. When I talk to friends and family, people in the community, it seems like we are trying to figure out what's going on. Parents are scared and unsure. Teachers especially. Dr. Park spoke of how important it is for kids to be able to see faces and facial expressions. If I am concerned for my health and members of my family I will do what I need to do. I plan on wearing a face mask and a face shield in class to protect myself and my students. Sorry, Dr. Park, but I don't have any other options. Dr. Anderson said there will be teachers and students who will become infected. That is supposed to be okay? I agree that we can't live like this forever, but we need a solid plan. There is so much new information that is in the news about this virus. It's difficult to keep up and yet here we are, trying to start school in the middle of all of this.

Some suggestions:
-I believe we should delay the opening of schools. That will give schools more time to plan and prepare for the unknown.
-Change the MOU: distance learning first--> when cases settle then transition to an A/B schedule--> finally return to face to face
-We need to take the responsibility off of the backs of the DOE at this time. We needs businesses and other agencies to allow for telework or a flexible schedule. There needs to be a partnership between the DOE and places of business so that parents will not get penalized for childcare, especially if their children are doing distance learning.

Mahalo for your time.

Gmail

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

Testimony

K Kumashiro <keanekumashiro@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I am writing to testify on Action Item G and respectfully ask that you REJECT the proposal.

We all understand that these are difficult financial times and that we need to look for ways to reduce the budget. However, I believe this proposal unfairly affects the at-risk population much more severely than other student populations.

I am a teacher at Olomana School, which is a hard-to-staff school that services a student body that is comprised almost entirely of at-risk students. We are a hard-to-staff school because it's very difficult to find teachers who are willing to come in and work with some of the most challenging students around. I've seen teachers leave mid-year because of the students. But since you implemented the extra compensation, we've actually had more teachers apply and stay with us. We can begin the year with qualified and enthusiastic teachers instead of hunting for replacements in the middle of the year.

I ask that you REJECT the proposal and help us reach the students who need us the most.

Thank you,
Keane Kumashiro
Olomana School Teacher

Gmail

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

Differentials for SpEd Teachers

banyan regina <banyanr@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:55 PM

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

Thank you for all the extra hours you are spending on education during this stressful times.

Thank you for reconsidering the far too generous differentials for a sub group of teachers. ALL teachers teach special educations students. Yet, most of us receive no extra compensation for those students.

The huge amount of the differential causes resentment among teachers. Special Education teachers already have one more preparation period than the rest of the faculty.

During this time of dwindling state revenues, please stop giving special consideration to special education teachers.

Thank you very much.

Charlene Hosokawa
Moanalua High School Teacher

Shawna Davis
Third Grade Teacher
Kealakehe Elementary School
shawna.davis@k12.hi.us

July 20, 2020

To Board of Education:

I am writing this letter with great concern for the future education of Hawaii's keiki. I have a vested interest in this matter as a mother, a taxpayer, and a teacher. I have taught in Hawaii's public schools for seventeen years.

In the last seventeen years, I have seen many colleagues leave Hawaii or leave teaching because of the inability to survive on a Hawaii teacher's salary. I myself have spent many years waitressing or nannying on top of my full time teaching position to supplement my basic pay.

This year was the first time I felt appreciated as a teacher in Hawaii when we were given shortage differentials. We have a teacher shortage in Hawaii. But now it is being proposed to remove these shortage differentials. Many teachers decided to stay or move to a district based on these differentials. It is unfair to take them away after teachers have signed their contracts. Please reconsider removing these differentials. The future of our keiki depends on having qualified teachers in the classroom. If budget cuts are needed, I urge you to have the DOE find even more areas that can be trimmed before cutting salaries. Last year our school had three long term substitutes in classrooms but we had many positions at our school who did not work directly with students. We also had trainers flown in from the mainland to teach. Perhaps professional development could be postponed until after the crisis as one way to help prevent paycuts. Or perhaps some of the district positions who do not work with students could go back into the classrooms that are still needing qualified teachers instead of hiring new teachers. Please support the teachers who are working directly with the students and do not cut our pay. Please continue the shortage differentials for the teachers who are working with the most vulnerable students. Teachers are fearful to return to the classroom but we will do what is best for our students. Please do not take away any of our pay as we brave this virus.

Sincerely,

Shawna Davis

Gmail

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

Testimony in opposition to item G

liberty furchgott <libertypoetez@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,

I am writing to request that you, and all others with the power to do so, VOTE NO ON ITEM G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I have been a special education teacher for twelve plus years at several schools here on the Big Island of Hawaii, and throughout my years, without the differential pay, I have struggled as a single mother to make ends meet.

There were times when I could barely afford gas to commute to work and I used a classroom "potty mouth" coin jar to pump in a couple dollars worth of gas. Not only could I barely afford my commute but I had to rely on WIC to supplement my grocery budget as I was not making enough to provide for myself and my family.

While I do love my profession and serving our keiki, I have often questioned the logic in continuing to work as a teacher when I could barely keep up with bills; and god forbid I have a car problem or a medical expense to pay.

The current differentials have helped me to sustain a basic level of economic security so that I don't have to worry about going into debt and I can focus my efforts on my profession and not on economic burdens.

Without these differentials I would revert to barely making a living wage. When you get into the nitty gritty, I actually still work for less than minimum wage; when you take into account all of the time beyond the school day that I plan differentiated lessons and assess student progress, that I gather & analyze data, write IEPs, communicate and coordinate with parents and team members and hold IEPs, team meetings and re-evaluations. Not only do I do all of these things regularly but I also commute over an hour and half daily.

Truly what has sustained my continued commitment to my profession and position has been the current differentials. Without these differentials in place and in combination with the new responsibilities and risks being added to my job description because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I would definitely reconsider whether to continue as a special education teacher in a hard to staff school (and turnover is immense at my location).

So I humbly ask that you VOTE NO ON ITEM G.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Liberty Furchgott
Honoka'a High & Intermediate School
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

TEACHER TESTIMONY - for July 23 BOE meeting

Kileigh Sanchez <kileighsanchez@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:34 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kileigh Sanchez, and I am a 7th and 8th grader teacher at Wai'anae Intermediate School on the island of O'ahu. My written testimony below is in reference to the proposed temporary suspension of extra compensation for classroom teachers in SPED, hard-to-staff locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for SY20-21, and I strongly OPPOSE doing so. As a sixth year teacher, I have committed the last six years of my career and life to the students on the Leeward Coast. I have seen improvements towards paying teachers a truly professional wage, but I am dismayed with the possibility of cutting differentials funding for this school year (SY 20-21). Teachers are realizing that they can be paid a professional wage in countless other jobs even though they have the skills, training, and education to lead a classroom of students to success. Many teachers, including myself, find themselves struggling to pay mortgages for houses in an increasingly ridiculous housing market in Hawai'i and have found that teaching just won't cut it if we intend to have families, homes, and lives outside of school. How can we be expected to remain in a career where we are not paid as respected professionals, many of whom have higher ed degrees beyond a teaching certification/license and 4-year degree? Deciding against cutting the differentials funding at this critical time where teachers are already being forced into less than ideal conditions in the classroom would be a CATASTROPHIC blow to the profession and the schools of Hawai'i. Teachers deserve respect and to not be undercut as they have been in the past time and time again. According to the data reported, this past year's differential funding was actually proving to be effective, yet I guarantee if the differentials are suspended, the availability of high-quality teachers will take a nosedive and can only worsen with a pay cut slap in the face. Many open positions left empty by cutting salaries at such a critical time will likely be filled with untrained, long-term substitutes, which would be a huge detriment to our keiki's education, and we are already seeing that this is true due to teacher shortages across the islands. Cutting differentials would ensure that teachers at our most vulnerable schools are forced to find new jobs, myself included. This is a pivotal decision for a lot of teachers in deciding whether or not they will return to teaching in a few short weeks. I'm sick of the uncertainty and lack of respect for the profession and believe our children deserve better than teachers who feel unappreciated and underpaid, but I will not sacrifice my own family and financial stability "in the name of education" and "for the keiki" when cutting the differentials are clearly in direct opposition to actually supporting our students by investing in our educators. This decision is about INVESTING in the future of our keiki whose importance and value are beyond any measurable ROI, and I believe that the BOE needs to REJECT any sort of salary cut or canceling of differential pay in an effort to pay our teachers a fair and respectable wage for the work they are ALREADY doing.

Mahalo for your time.

--
Kileigh Sanchez, M.S.Ed.
Art Educator, Waianae Intermediate School
Vanderbilt University '14, Communications and Studio Art
Johns Hopkins University '16, Master of Science, Education

Phone: (808) 305-2738

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Gmail

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

Continued funding for hard to staff school

Laureen Sturm <lsturm@kamaile.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello there!
I am writing to you to inform you that I am one of those teachers who work in the hard to staff school area and begging for my extra pay to keep a float. I work on the northwest side of Oahu which is not the most ideal place to teach. Many of my students are homeless, live in shelters their cars or the beach and I enjoy teaching each and every one of them. I do use my extra funding not on myself but for blankets in the classroom so my students can take a nap if they need to because of their homelife, I buy crackers and healthy snacks for their bodies so they can concentrate on school and even soap and toothbrushes for them. I desperately need this funding to help my students thrive and to become better students and individuals. Please do not cut this funding from us.
Sincerely,
Miss Lu
3rd grade teacher
Kamaile Academy Charter

Testimony

Gabby Pascua <gabrielleroback422@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Gabrielle Pascua and I'm a Special Education Math Teacher at Maui High School. I love being a special education teacher. I've loved it since day one. It does get overwhelming at times, and I have thought of leaving special education, but have yet to do so. Many general education teachers ask me why I stay in this position as I am qualified to also teach general education. "I don't know how you deal with all that paperwork and meetings." Some others say, "How do you have the patience?" or "Doesn't the behaviors overwhelm you?" Every single year I am asked by Department Head's to come teach for their general education classes, but I don't do it. This differential has forever sealed my position as special education, or so I thought.

My point is, nobody is lining up for my job, especially not before these differentials. It seems as though everyone's goal was to "get out" of special education. I've been at Maui High for 7 years now and with 24 sped teachers, only 7 teachers have stayed in their positions since I've been there. All others have transferred into general education at their first opportunity because they felt burnt out and overwhelmed with all the demands of being a special education teacher. While others have moved back home to the mainland because our pay does not match our worth and the cost of living here in Hawaii. These differentials have made such an amazing difference in filling our lines with certified special education teachers and taking it away would be taking it away from our ABSOLUTE MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS. Not only are the students being robbed, but you will now have parents who have the grounds to sue schools when they are trying to figure out how to help their kids virtually with inexperienced, uncertified teachers.

Our job this school year, more than ever will require us to work even harder than we've ever done. How do we accommodate and modify virtually? How do we have IEP's and set up meetings virtually? How do we do assessments virtually? How do we give them the minutes they're required to have, virtually? How do we make sure our variance students are doing well in all their classes virtually? How do we make sure they are getting the support in those classes that they are entitled to, virtually? Our job as special education teachers is not just to teach like every other teacher, but to figure out all of this on top of that. With no clear guidelines. We deserve our differential more than ever. Taking it away will only leave the state with even more vacancies and IEP's not being met and result in infinite due process cases and ultimately a collapse of our education system here in Hawaii as we know it.

Gmail

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

SPED teacher testimony

Liz Light <lizzardlight@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing testimony to oppose the proposed removal of pay differentials for SPED teachers and other hard to staff areas.

My name is Elizabeth Light, and I am a special education preschool teacher at Jefferson Elementary School.

As a SPED teacher, about to go back to teaching my students face to face, I am shocked that this proposal is being considered. SPED teachers have to be, as a group, one of the most vulnerable teaching populations going back to work. We can NOT maintain 6 feet of distance, and often have children who need assistance with toileting and feeding. Are we being provided with extra cleaning supplies, protection, or consideration? No, we are not. Are we still going back? Yes, we are. We are the most at risk, and you want to remove our pay differential?

Secondly, it's always made abundantly clear to me as a SPED teacher that we can be sued at the drop of a hat. Now, parents are lawyering up due to COVID closures. We're SPED teachers, it comes with the territory. These pay differentials certainly helped to soften this constant anxiety being put on us, especially now, and you want to take them away?

Finally, I want to speak personally. For me, this pay differential has given me the financial ability to be able to pursue a Master's degree. Without this differential, I am not sure if I will be able to afford this education that would help me as a teacher. For other teachers I know, it may mean they cannot afford to live here much longer.

It was so validating to receive this differential back in January. It felt like someone finally recognized our value For it now to be ripped away, feels like a slap in the face.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Light

Gmail

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

Testimony

Daniella Griffay <dgriffay@radford.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,
I am emailing you to testify on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaii language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

These pay differential work and have helped fill positions that Hawaii has had trouble filling. Teachers in these positions have increase challenges they must face and should be compensated for. According to the department's data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming school year has increased by 29% and the number leaving has decreased by 57%. Myself, I am a special education teacher for 3 years and wanted to move to general ed but because of these pay differentials, I have decided to stay in special education. If this is removed then I will not be staying in special education.

Since these positions are the hardest to staff they are most likely to get an unqualified or uncertified teacher to fill these positions. These are the students that need the most help and the most qualified teachers but tend to get the least qualified instead. Cutting these differentials will hurt our Kekei.

Best Regard,
Daniella Griffay
Radford High School
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Michelle Miyahana <mmiyahan@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**. Please consider REJECTING this proposal!

My name is Michelle Miyahana, I am a Special Education teacher at Kapunahala Elementary School and have been teaching here for 6 years. This upcoming school year will be my 7th year working for the state and in my current position.

I first need to start by saying I love my students and care for each and every one of them tremendously. I love having the opportunity to teach and build confidence in my students everyday. It has become a cliche amongst teachers, but my students really do teach me so much everyday.

As a Special Education teacher I have taught various “types” of students. I have worked with numerous autistic students, students with severe mental health issues, students with severe behavioral issues and those with severe emotional issues as well. Many of these students have needed incentive programs, as listed on their IEP, to be able to function from day to day. Many, if not ALL, of the incentives have come out of my own pocket. The money I earn as an educator most often goes right back into my classroom and my students as we are not granted the flexibility or the funds to provide what is needed in my field to help the students thrive.

Before the differential pay was granted I was living paycheck-to-paycheck. I have 3 college degrees, am a dual licensed educator, and was still living at bare minimum. This confused me. How could someone with all that training, licensure and expertise be living paycheck-to-paycheck? I knew going into this profession I was not going to earn much. It was strictly for the love of teaching. As my bills increase and my students needs change I was struggling with the idea of getting a SECOND job to afford what is needed. This was something I absolutely did not want to do and felt was completely unacceptable.

However, with the differential I was able to finally begin putting away some money in savings. It was a relief knowing I didn’t have to worry about if I’d have enough money to carry me over until the next paycheck. I felt as though a small weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I felt supported and appreciated and heard!
I currently rent a 600 sq ft studio. I would like to be able to save some money to eventually purchase a house, as every working adult should be able to do!

My significant other will be leaving the military this year and we have both contemplated leaving Hawaii, to reside in his home state of Texas, to pursue greater/more prosperous opportunities on the mainland. This makes me sad. I have grown up in kaneohe my entire life. I am part-hawaiian and would like to stay and teach in my hometown and embrace my culture. But how can I do this when money is constantly taken away from education and its educators?

I ask that you please consider rejecting this proposal. If this newly granted differential pay is removed this will most likely be my last year as an educator in the state of Hawaii as I will no longer be able to afford to live here. I am disappointed in the DOE and superintendent Kishimoto with how easily they can go back on a promise that was made. The differential pay has been proven effective. The number of special education teachers has gone up! Special education can thrive, but NOT if it is defunded. Don’t ALL children deserve a properly licensed teacher in their field?
Please KEEP the differential pay and support our special education program and our students with special needs!
REJECT the proposal. Fund our special education teachers!

Mahalo for your time and consideration!
Michelle Miyahana

Gmail

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

SPED Teacher Differential

Zane Meirick <zane.meirick@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Honorable Board of Education Members;

My name is Zane Meirick and I am a special education teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School. I am in strong support of the continuation of the Differentials to help us reduce the teacher shortage crisis (1000+ teacher positions vacant=30,000+ students negatively affected) that is going to balloon in the new norm of Covid 19. Several months ago the superintendent said she thought these were important and she could keep them in place this year by using Covid 19 funding. The increased pay for special education teachers, hard to staff areas, Hawaiian immersion teachers, and getting teachers that have sacrificed for years without getting the proper step increases during economic turmoil to get back to the step they have earned.

This was my first year teaching in Hawaii. My salary does not recognize my 15 years of teaching experience, so my starting salary was almost the same as someone without any experience. The $10,000 increase that I received this year was the only reason that I returned as a teacher. If you don't continue to support this differential for special education teachers, I will not be able to continue to work here for the state of Hawaii.

Please support them and find a way to make teachers and their students a priority during the challenges of Covid 19.

Thanks

Zane Meirick

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

Cleaning is classroom

Tristin Enos-Manuel <blacktahoe711@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

As a parent of school age children. 1 is in a charter, 1 in public, 1 in headstart.

I was hoping the BOE/DOE would add to the curriculum: life lesson- cleaning and hygiene.

My niece attended school in Japan, and she mentioned that every period/class began with cleaning. This reminds me of what I do when I enter my workstation at my job.

The first 10mins of class is dedicated to cleaning & hygiene. Each student Wipes down their individual work station with Disinfectant...teachers teaching them how to do it correctly(this life lesson is good and can be used through their lives).

They also taught about HIGH TOUCH areas and the significant of frequency to clean(I.e. light switch, handle, door knob, etc)these are wiped down by the teacher during this 10min time slot.

When finished, they will then wash up. Properly wash hands to elbows and face.

This is done at the beginning of EVERY period throughout the day. (So in a 6 period day, that desk was wiped down 6 times!)This made sure desk, equipment, keyboard was clean and germ free keeping our kids safe.

I already do this at my cubicle at work, waaaay before corona. It keeps me from getting sick, and catching whatever virus my coworker may have inadvertently spread. This must be done in schools and not left up to the janitor who cleans classes ONCE and the END of the day.

We are living in different times.

Thank you for listening,

Tristin Manuel
808-452-4837

Sent from Tristin's iPhone

Gmail

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

testimony for Special Education teachers pay compensation

Alison Adams <ahadams426@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To The Board of Education,

I have been a Special Education teacher for almost 20 years. During my career we have experienced pay reductions, furloughs and very minimal,pay increases. Special Education teachers work long hours planning lessons (most Sped teachers service more than one grade level with students with a range of needs), planning/attending IEP meetings, assessing students' needs and doing reports. The school day is not long enough to get all the work done. I spend evenings and weekends preparing for meetings and completing my IEP/progress reports. Due to the legal sensitivity of our job, you really need to be focused when doing reports or preparing for a meeting. That is why I do a lot of my reports at home, where there are less distractions. Getting the compensation made me feel validated for all the workI have done throughout the years. I became a Special Education teacher because I have a nephew who became special needs at the age of 6 due to a cancerous brain tumor. We need Special Education teachers. We want young people to see this profession as a viable choice. I am nearing the end of my teaching career so I am asking for you to save our compensation for the teachers that are up and coming. Special education teachers are unique individuals and a very important part of our entire educational system. They bring a perspective and a passion for children that benefits us all.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

A.Adams
Special Education Resource teacher

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kelly Higgins <kelly.higgins@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Name: Kelly Higgins

School: Kailua Elementary

I have been teaching for 9 years and this upcoming year will be my 10th. Of those 9 years 4 have been in Hawaii as a special education teacher. While teaching I still hold two other year long jobs from other employers which allow me to remain in Hawaii and an educator. When I started to be compensated with the differential pay I was able to cut back my hours at my other two positions. Doing so gave me more time for meetings after school to meet parents' needs for their student(s) on an IEP and it allowed me those few extra hours I didn't have before to plan and collaborate with other teachers to be able to make sure all of the students with special needs were included in activities as best as possible. There is endless paperwork that comes alongside being a special education teacher, and there is not enough time in the day to get it done. Having the differential pay gave me more time to spend on that paperwork that is crucial to students' success in their general education classrooms. As educators we teach everyday because we love the students and want to see them succeed. However, every year I wonder what else I can do outside of the education world in order to only have one job and only work 8 hours a day rather than the normal 10-11 hours and weekends. The differential pay helped settle my mind and ease my thoughts on leaving education because it allowed me to stay where I am living, keep my current classroom out of pocket budget alive, and cut the hours of my 3rd job down to 6 hours a week from 12.

If the differential pay is retracted, I will be negatively impacted and have to start looking for a position elsewhere. I do not want to do that and have lost 2 friends and colleagues to the pay shortage here in Hawaii. They both quit teaching in Hawaii and moved back to the mainland for a more stable salary. It will impact my students negatively as well since I see how they are treated when they are not in my care. They need teachers that are aware of how to differentiate and not just say they differentiate, and they need someone to take time out of their day to explain things and model learning using hands-on learning. I am spread thin across 2-3 grade levels for inclusion teaching, along with having to teach for 3 hours each day in my own resource room with students in 3 grade levels, and now with a pay shortage I am not sure where the funding is going to go, but I know it doesn't belong anywhere else besides where it currently is. We have almost 10 special education students in each grade level and with one teacher (myself) funded to run around to 3 grade levels, and my own classroom, along with teaching in the students general education classes, and planning with those teachers, differentiating the general education lessons for all subjects, along with IEP paperwork, parent phone calls, and teaching EA's how to work with students to meet their individual goals, individual professional development classes, PDe3, and student SLO data, and last but not least meet with BCBA's, counselors, LBA's, 1:1's, individual teachers regarding student progress...this funding should be higher than it is! Keeping the funding where it is or increasing it should be the only thought in our minds at the moment.

If your student had special needs and could not get the proper learning, support, and care then how would you deal with it? I hope you understand that this funding has allowed people such as myself (with a masters degree in special education) to take more time and give more support to students, teachers, and parents. I appreciate your time and look forward to teaching our keiki in two weeks.

Aloha,

Kelly Higgins

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Kanoe Rillamas <krillamas@kaaawaschool.k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,
I am testifying on Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and hawaiian immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
My name is Kanoelani Rillamas, I am the first grade teacher at Ka'a'awa Elementary School. Please do not use COVID-19 as an excuse to retract this decision and cut pay for educators. This pandemic has caused hardships throughout the world but students and teachers have risen to the challenge of providing a safe and secure distant learning environment. This action says, "temporary discontinuance" so when will it be reinstated? When will we recover from COVID-19? We teach our students that effective leaders think win-win. Think of another solution without harming the lives of students and teachers. Please do the right thing and make education a priority!
Mahalo,
Kanoelani Rillamas

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Brandon Cha <brandoncha3@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Honorable Board of Education,

My name is Brandon Cha, and I am a teacher at Pearl City High School.

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please REJECT the Superintendent's proposal and continue to fund the extra compensation for these groups of teachers. As an inclusion teacher, I am one half of a general education and SPED education team that teaches and supports Special Education students in a general education setting.

The compensation has allowed many of my colleagues to consider staying in their current positions at my school, which allows us to have qualified and licensed Special education teachers to continue to support our students, instead of resorting to long-term substitutes or emergency hires.

Taking away this compensation, compounded with the fallout of the pandemic, will force many of my colleagues to consider leaving their posts, at at time when our SPED student will critically need assessment and assistance to make up for lost learning and time during the pandemic.

I urge you to consider continuing these compensation for all involved teacher parties.

Thank you,

- Brandon Cha
Pearl City High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Leona Watson <lpwright@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai e BOE board members,
I am writing to ask that you reject this proposal in helping to support all teachers in our hard to staff areas. I believe with the extra amount of time required to scaffold and differentiations of lessons requires many hours at home for lesson planning. In additional to IEP writing I feel that all teachers in these hard to staff areas continue to receive support.
Malama pono,
Leona

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kate Maloney <kateannmaloney@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher in Hawaii I do not agree with this pay difference. There should be an across the board pay raise for all teachers to keep up with the cost of living. This pay difference creates animosity among colleagues and should not be offered to people just because they are meeting their job requirement expectations. I could understand a one time incentive bonus if a teacher chooses to get certified in a high needs area but this salary bonus is unfair for the teachers that have been meeting their job requirement expectations. As a 20 year veteran teacher, I oppose this and can not fathom why it was initially implemented. I'm embarrassed and insulted by this proposal.
Sincerely,
Kate Maloney

Gmail

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

Testimony

Leona Sa McDermott <LSAMCDERMOTT@hawaii.rr.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 4:59 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To The Board of Education, Board of directors.

I'm testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations and Hawaiian Language immersion programs for the 202-2021 school year.

My Name is Leona Sa McDermott parent of an SPED student over the past years that attended Kapaa High School, an advocate for special needs and a coach for Special Olympics Kauai.

When my son attended Kapaa High School, I had to struggle in getting him the qualified SPED teachers to carry out his IEP goals. Only soon after he became a senior, the qualified teachers came on board and by that time, a great deal of learning time was completely lost and trying to bring him up to par was a challenge.

Our SPED teachers today do way more than what their job description consist of. They spend a lot of their own money to suffice what they need in the classroom to teach these individuals with intellectual disabilities, give them the tools and materials for learning. Yet the ultimate dedication they have for our children is priceless. Then you ask yourself why they chose this line of a career when they can be doing something else making more money every month. Did you ever sat in a classroom with these individuals with multi disabilities and one teacher dealing with them one on one? I did!
There's no way I could pull that off in a full day's of work, but the SPED teachers do and they don't get paid well for all what they do.

So in this case, when you talk about cutting salaries, you creating a crisis.
A crisis in a classroom that will effect every SPED student. How you may ask?
Qualified teachers will end up leaving. Are you gonna be able to sleep at night knowing your decision on a pay cut will affect not only the teachers who will be leaving, but affect the SPED student left without a qualified teacher, a parents worst nightmare of their childs IEP goals not being met? Not to mention say you cut a pay of perhaps $800.00 a month from a teacher that is equivalent of $800.00 a month of no money to buy food for their own family? Do you all want this ripple effect to come to surface in the current situation we all enduring today in this pandemic?

All I'm saying is when you all make decisions, especially budget cuts to valuable personnel in place in this case we talking about the teachers, think of all who will be affected with the outcome. It will be the students. If that happens, you are not providing a free and appropriate education for our children.

Mahalo

Gmail

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

Testimony

Wendy Nickl <wendyfivec@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**

Aloha,
My name is Wendy Nickl. I am a 34 year Hawaii public school veteran, working at Kohala Middle School as a registrar and curriculum coordinator.

The hard-to-staff differential has helped me with committing to teaching longer in Hawaii. We veteran teachers mentor and support our new teachers, which not only supports them but benefits their students. I continue to teach as an advisor, study hall and homeroom teacher because I believe I can help my students with daily guidance. I also learn so much from my students.

Deferring the differential is going to increase the massive teacher shortage in Hawaii. Experienced teachers will leave. Please give our students the best teachers and acknowledge their worth and right to make an adequate wage in Hawaii. We teach with aloha, compassion and skill in our rural areas, helping our economically challenged students AND families move forward in the 21st century.

Please do not defer the hard to staff, special education and Hawaiian immersion program differentials.

Mahalo,
Wendy Nickl
Kohala Middle School, Island of Hawaii

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Tammy Chang. I am a special educator at Kea'au Elementary School and a parent of a child with special needs. I am writing in regards to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education and hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Covid-19 has changed all of our lives as a community and given us a glimpse into what it is like for those who live and work with our special needs population: 24/7 problem solving, constant work arounds, dealing with financial strain has we hunt for and invest in solutions to life threatening, quality of life, academic, social, emotional, financial and other issues. We experience emotional exhaustion, financial and physical depletion and still get up in the morning and do it again. My son, who has Autism, ADHD, Sensory Integration, Executive Functioning and Social Cognitive deficits as well as Anxiety, is the reason I chose to become a special educator. The shortage of qualified special educators in our system made me extremely uncomfortable as a parent. I ended up homeschooling him from Pre-school to 4th grade. As the years went by, I worked with many special educators on behalf of my son and decided that I could be part of the solution.

When I, along with other educators in hard to fill positions, heard that the union, state and the DOE were working together to provide us with greatly needed financial support, I was pleasantly surprised and relieved. I know that it was a business decision, done for teacher retention and to attract more teachers to the hard to fill areas, but it raised my moral and encouraged me anyway. When the 10K was given out during the Spring Semester of 2020, it was like fresh spring water pouring out onto parched soil. When Covid-19 hit and the differential was taken from paychecks during the summer, it hurt. We watched as unemployment received federal funds to subsidize those who lost their jobs and realized that many on unemployment were now making more than educators who are standing in hard to fill positions. **The unemployed is now making more than us.**

Teaching is a profession. As special educators we are in a specialized field, carrying heavier loads because of the shortages, and expected to be on the front lines with our students (children) during this pandemic. Putting our health and the health and well-being of our families on the line. We are the ones who will be servicing the students with more diverse needs than I could list here. Students who may struggle with staying 6 feet apart, who may not be able to wear masks or keep their hands sanitized, who may not be able to tell us that they are not feeling well, and who need to learn in a face to face setting every day in order to progress. No other professionals who service these students in our system are paid so little (SLP's, OT's, PT's). We understand why cut backs are happening, but do they truly need to affect those of us standing in specialized, hard to fill positions? Is there nowhere else to cut back?

Someone once said that when the words that are spoken match the action that is given then there is truth. Please reject this proposal so that 4,000 teachers, of which I am one, can feel supported and valued and receive what was promised to us in the form of differential pay for hard to fill positions in hard to fill places.

Sincerely,

Gmail

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

Testimony

Katherine Brown <katecitrustwo@msn.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:15 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Action item G will be fundamentally wrong. It is a slap in the face to the good teachers of Hawaii.

I did not decide to teach in Hawaii to become rich. However, I did hope serve the Keiki and my community. I know I'll never be able to afford to buy a home here. I would like to be able to continue to earn enough to continue living here. This item passing would make it more than difficult. It doesn't seem like the department cares if I stay or leave.

Today, I have been working in my classroom to get ready for the new school year. It is my care for the students that motivates me. This state needs good teachers. I'm not the only one that cares. Many teachers will be stretched thin, and this is not the type of advantage that we want for the students. These students are the future of Hawaii. Please continue our differential.

Katherine Brown
Wailuku Elementary School
Special Education Teacher

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

opening schools, and safety

Denise Webb <denisehwebb@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern,
I sent this e-mail (with a few changes) to the faculty of my school. What I didn't mention was the fact that other family members besides my husband (mentioned) are at higher risk. What I also didn't mention is that I am contemplating NOT working for at least a quarter, and I am a special education teacher. My admin likely won't find a replacement:

Are you as terrified about in-person teaching as I am? If my husband works from home due to real reasons why he is at high risk, but meanwhile, if I am exposed at work, his staying home will be useless. We've been planning how to get me home after work but not carry covid with me into the house. Have you been talking about this, too?
Some of us are at high risk. Even healthy people are getting very sick, and kids appear to be exhibiting damage even when they don't show symptoms. How many of you get the colds that flood the school every year? I do. Why wouldn't covid, which is quite transmissible, be passed along just as well. I don't see how DOE can provide a safe work environment for us or a safe school day for kids. Cases are increasing. Unless/until community spread is handled, how can we possibly have a safe work environment?
What if we all decide to get doctor's notes and are excused somehow from going back to work in-person? If more than a few of us do this, can the school open?
What about subs? Who on earth would want to sub? Our pool of subs are retired teachers, for goodness sakes!
Am I alone?
Denise

Gmail

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

Keep Hard to staff funding

Kiliona Palauni <kilionapalauni@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Kiliona Palauni I teach at Kamaile Academy which is located on the Leeward coast of Oahu. I commute every day from Kalihi to teach my kids. As a parent of a toddler I heavily rely on the hard to staff differential. This pay helps me afford my childcare and gas. I honestly don't think I could cover my bills if I did not receive this pay. Please keep us teachers in mind when you make your decisions. Many of us could easily teach in town but choose to work in places like the Leeward coast. I fear taking away this pay will force many of us to seek work closer to home leaving many vacancies in the Leeward schools that are already forced to hire emergency hires. These kids deserve a good education please take care of us teachers so we can take care of our Keiki!

Kiliona Palauni

Testimony on Action Item G

Suzanne Goodrich <suzanne.goodrich@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Suzanne Goodrich, and I am a special educator who would like to testify on **Action Item G**: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I will be starting my 9th school year as a special educator at Radford High School and am proud to have also taught special needs high schoolers at my alma mater in Virginia for 8 years. I was a military dependent whose formative elementary days at Mililani Uka were so positive and nurturing that I chose to return to Hawaii as an adult in order to enjoy cultural diversity, amazing ecosystems, and cherished island traditions. My first exposure to Hawaii's special needs population was through my work as a youth counselor in Hale Kipa's group homes for attachment disturbed youth from 2000 - 2002. These youngsters came from broken homes, failed foster placements, and most often were wards of the state transitioning away from hospitalization at Kahi Mohala. The boys' group home was in Ewa and the girls' group home was in Waianae. From 2 pm to 10 pm, energetic, caring souls like me led youth through recreational activities, meal preparation, assistance with household chores, and hygiene routines - all the while trying to create a safe environment for growing and healing while supporting social and emotional development. Those amazing survivors taught me great lessons in resilience and showed me the amazing strength and potential of Hawaii's keiki. These youngsters inspired me to learn more about cognitive development and find ways to help them grow their talents while building healthy relationships and unlocking their love for learning.

Yet even with a bachelor's degree in literature from the University of Virginia, I could not sustain the cost of living out here, working as a youth counselor, for more than two years without beginning to accrue credit card debt. So I returned to Virginia to further my education in hopes that I could one day afford to live in my beloved Hawaii again if I entered the profession of teaching. In 2006, after earning my master's in Special Education from George Mason University, I moved back to Hawaii, started teaching at Radford, and began learning about its unique student body and campus culture. I brought my understanding of learning disabilities and emotional disturbances along with my love for the healing power of words to language arts classrooms in order to get kids with IEP's motivated to share their stories. While working to strengthen reading comprehension and written expression, I found ways to weave humor and relevance into my instruction while playing off of students' oral communication and problem solving skills. Unfortunately, pay cuts prompted by the recession in 2009 contributed to my husband and I having to return to Virginia soon after we started a family. We were only able to afford the added expense of child care for the first two years of our daughter's life but were grateful that her earliest memories are of the beauty of the Pacific. For the next 5 years in Virginia, we saved money and dreamed of one day returning to Oahu to try again to afford life in the islands. In 2018, we triumphantly moved back to Oahu, and I was even fortunate enough to rejoin the special education department at Radford. While I had been away on the mainland, my colleagues had been hard at work forging strong lines of communication between school and home so that students with exceptional learning needs receive continuity in programming and instruction despite the transiency affiliated with military families. Radford special educators have also worked hard to equip students with the technology skills needed for future academic endeavors and career opportunities. They have encouraged and helped students better understand their disabilities so that they can better advocate for their own learning needs and even take a leadership role in their IEP meetings.

Personally, the additional pay this semester enabled my small family to fly back east to visit relatives over spring break as well as pay a pet deposit on the townhouse we rent so that we could adopt a dog. Receiving the full $10,000 compensation this school year made me feel hopeful that I might actually experience the joy of home-ownership on Oahu before I turn 50 and that setting aside money *now* to help finance my daughter's college education in the *future* was not impractical. The thought of finally being rewarded for the countless hours spent gathering information for, coordinating, reading, and writing IEP's validated the high standards that I set for myself and my students. Because the valuable work that we do with our most vulnerable students doesn't stop at the end of the day. As special educators, we are always thinking of how we can best prepare students for successful, productive lives within their communities. We are continually adapting lessons to compensate for students' deficits and support their mental, social and emotional needs. I fear that discontinuing the funding of shortage differentials to educators in the three worst shortage areas might cause many professionals like me to have to look for work elsewhere. Having to say goodbye to departing teachers and train new teachers would take a toll on the learning community and would further harm the quality of education on many campuses. Discontinuing financial compensation that was promised to thousands of teachers after they have already accepted positions for this school year feels very under-handed. I know there are special educators who had been teaching in the

general education setting who chose to return to the demands of special education in order to help fill those important positions. Other educators chose to remain in or relocated to hard-to-staff schools this year because the financial compensation would help to off-set their sacrifices. Unexpectedly slashing the salaries of teachers in these shortage areas would add more stress to our plates as we prepare to reopen our school campuses. Although a retraction of promised pay differentials may help to balance the budget, it will devastate the limited supply of qualified teachers who are willing to serve Hawaii's most vulnerable students.

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony and considering it in your decision making. I truly hope you will choose to continue to fund the much-needed and well deserved compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Goodrich, M. Ed.

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

Testimony - Action Items G & H

Anthony McCurdy <amccurdy808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:25 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,

I am a teacher at James Campbell High School in Ewa Beach. I am writing to you regarding two items that you are or may be addressing in your meeting: teacher pay differentials and plans for extracurricular activities.

Regarding teacher pay differentials, I support keeping them. As a former special education teacher, I can tell you that the pay differentials made a difference for many of my colleagues. We are already facing a severe teacher shortage that is only being exacerbated by the pandemic and we do not need to add to it by taking away some of the support we have actually started providing our teachers. Taking away the pay differentials would be a big mistake.

Regarding the DOE plan to start student extracurricular activities in August, I do not support this decision and think it is a mistake. Please understand, I am a club advisor, my daughters both are in a fall sport and involved in other extracurricular activities, but I think it is potentially very dangerous to open up too fast for sports and clubs when we aren't even sure our six foot distancing and mandatory masks will work to keep our keiki and communities safe. I am Type I diabetic and thus in a high risk category, which means that for my club to meet, I have to expose myself to additional risks after school. This is not addressing the potential for students to spread infection and bring COVID19 home to multigenerational homes thereby endangering parents, grandparents and even great grandparents just to have sports and clubs.

Please look at the numbers - with up to 20% or more of students choosing to work online through Blackboard or Edgenuity or some other program, the community is sending a message that they are not prepared to risk their health or their lives. This is not forever, as I think we all sincerely hope for vaccines and reduced numbers from good public health practices by spring, but opening up right now for after school activities is another potentially big mistake.

Best regards,
Anthony McCurdy

--
Anthony McCurdy
808.675.6859
amccurdy808@gmail.com

Gmail

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

School's Re-Opening

Tess Lance <tesslance17@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing as a concerned parent of two young public school students. The DOE's decision to jump right into face-to-face learning in August has our family terribly worried. We have a high risk infant in our home, and have been mostly staying home since March in order to protect her, and ourselves. As the number of coronavirus cases in Hawaii slowly climb, I am inclined to keep my children safe at home and engage in distance learning only. I am pleading with you to make this the norm statewide, and re-open school in strategic phases that would make concerned parents, students, and teachers feel more at ease. We are weeks away from the start of school and there are a lot of questions that have still gone unanswered. I beg of you to consider beginning school on time online for all. As plans become more secure and coronavirus becomes more controlled, we can then move into other models of instruction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tess Valdez

Gmail

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

Special Education Differentials

Myra Machado <myra_machado2003@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:39 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Mrs. Myra Machado (Special Education Teacher)

4282 A Omao Road

Koloa, Hi. 96756

Email: myra_machado2003@yahoo.com phone: 808 635-4039

July 20, 2020

Dear Hawaii Board of Education

Aloha!! I am currently a special education teacher with 21 years of experience. My purpose in writing is to ask that you reconsider your discussion and planned proposal to take away differentials that were given to us last school year.

As a teacher with 21 years of experience, I have sat quietly while a number of major negatives issues affected my teaching career. The first one being a federal decree (Felix vs. Waihee). Thus, when I started teaching, I was not allowed to take a general education position even though I am dual certified. Therefore, while all other new teachers had choices to make within the teaching field, my position was frozen and I was not given any choice. There was no incentive for a teacher stuck in a sped position, while other teachers freely moved between grade levels, depending on the interest.

A short time after that, the Department of Education decided a way to help sped teacher shortages was to invent the "Columbia Experiment" which gave mainland teachers cash bonuses, moving expenses etc.. for teachers to move to Hawaii. The State of Hawaii quickly found out that after the sun and sea adventure wore off, mainland teachers went back to their states. Again, no incentives were given for local teachers who just wanted to make a living teaching island children.

In the last few years, the sped shortage has just gotten worse and as teachers we are paying for it. The reason being that when there is no "certified sped teacher" that can do IEP's, it falls on the teachers already in the school. The daily teaching position can be filled by a sub, but certified sped teachers still have the responsibility to run IEP's . An example was two years ago when our school was down two sped positions. With only two certified sped teachers in the school, we had to do 25 IEP'S each!!

I want to close this letter, by stating that after 20 years, I was finally able to smile and say that the state finally made a good faith effort to help with special education staffing. With that understanding, I felt that I could stay a few more years vs. retirement. I also thought that I would stay within the classroom and not look at a twelve month resource position that could help me with retirement pay. I made this choice because I felt the state was holding to a promise. Instead, the offer was held out to us (like a carrot) decisions were made based on the incentive and then the incentive was taken away. How many companies can do this without employees quitting.?

In summary, I really feel like I am being disrespected again and again, after so many other times I feel the BOE/DOE does not value us as teachers that have put a lot of extra hours and work (IEP's after school/ weekends) over and above our work time. Therefore, if the differentials are eliminated, then given the option of staying a few more years or retirement,-I will choose retirement. I can also pretty much guarantee you will have a hard time filling my position.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Myra Machado

Special Education teacher- Eleele School

Gmail

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

Please continue funding teacher shortage differentials

Lauren Canton <lkc2983@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Thank you for all you do for our Hawaii community. I am the School Counselor at Kohala Middle School. I have worked in this role for over 7 years. I love my job very much. I love what I do, and I feel so grateful to get to do my job every day.

I am emailing you to ask you to continue funding teacher shortage differentials. It is so important for educators and counselors, like me, to have a living wage to live and work in Hawaii, especially in small, rural towns like Kohala. In our isolated community, there are very minimal mental health resources. As a School Counselor, I spend my entire day doing individual and group counseling to promote social-emotional health among our youth. In therapy with youth, I work every day to break the cycle of violence and drug abuse that has deeply impacted our community by healing trauma, teaching coping skills, and developing self-worth. It is so important to fund teacher shortage differentials so that counselors and educators like me can make a living wage to continue the important work we do. On weekends, I work a part-time job answering sexual assault and domestic violence crisis hotline calls to supplement my DOE income. I have 2 Master's Degrees (one in counseling and one in education) from Harvard Graduate School of Education, and I still struggle financially due to the high cost of living and low wages for Hawaii teachers. I love what I do and I feel honored to do this meaningful work, and I believe I should be compensated fairly for the time and energy I put into my work every day. Every day teachers and counselors are working to make the future better and brighter for the next generation.

Please continue funding teacher shortage differentials.

Mahalo for reading my email.

Lauren

--
Lauren Canton, M.Ed.
School Social Worker/School Counselor
RPCV Senegal 2008-2010
cell 301 404 0252
e-mail LKC2983@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Personal Testament PLEASE READ NOW

Laura Farris <laura.farris@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

July 20, 2020

Dear Board of Education:

The quote you wrote, “These past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)” SHOULD INVOLVE A BONUS pay for all teachers IN ADDITION TO what they are already earning. Their salaries are no given to them but CONSCIENTIOSLY EARNED. Teachers have been working incredibly hard and spending extra hours on Professional Development voluntarily, learning how to be effective teachers virtually. Teachers are paying for and using their own home internet, their own home telephones, and their own resources and paying for these online or on Amazon. This is being done in order to reach ALL students. Special Education teachers and ELL teachers have spent extra hours, over and above the required contractual hours in order to accommodate for special needs.

Having to complete IEP meetings online takes twice the time and energy as in person meetings. Parents are overwhelmed and resistant to calls and emails from teachers. The parents too are overwhelmed. I have had to call and leave messages for parents daily for weeks at a time. Special Education teachers have had to keep extra required records showing EACH and EVERY contact with the parents and students. This was done from March through the end of the school year in May. This took hours of extra time and energy. This was so that the DISTRICT could cover their backs concerning COMPESATORY EDUCATION. Many teachers have to set up meetings with District Translators and that adds another element to the time frame. Many teachers (me included) have had to go into the school building in order to create write-in packets for those students who are not able to get online. Some of the students did not have the infrastructure, some did not have the knowledge, some did not have the parent support, and some did not have the motivation. These families get phone calls often to keep up progress, feedback, and success of the student. I have called many students to help them get started and involved in the new learning process. WE, the teachers, have been supports for not only the students but to the parents. Our relationships that we have cultivated over the year with parents have been a relief to the parents in the support they are able to receive. My parents know that they can call me at any time on MY PERSONAL CELL PHONE at any time. Can you attest to the same commitment to those you serve?

I also teach at Chaminade University as an adjunct professor in the area of Special Education. I have 32 students in the Masters program in the Special education Program this semester. If salary cuts are made, I will tell all of them to go find jobs and professions in other states where they can be appreciated and afford to live on their salary (especially the beginning teachers which they all will be in a month or a year…). I am rated as a Distinguished and top teacher in Hawaii DOE. I care. Please take care of our keiki and those who take care for them.

Best regards and Mahalo,

Dr. Laura Farris

Kaimuki Middle School

808-358-6151

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

Teacher Shortage Differentials Testimony

Mila Savini <mboucheva@kamaile.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am writing on behalf of the Teacher Shortage Differentials. I recently heard that there is a possibility that these differentials may get cancelled, and I highly, highly urge you not to do so. Teachers have always struggled to make ends meet. Many teachers' spouses lost their jobs during the pandemic. If you further cut pay, you will leave many teachers' families financially devastated. These are the people who are putting their health and safety at risk to teach our islands' haumana. Please, please, please, I beg you, DONT do it!!!

Mila Savini
ELL Department Coordinator

Kamaile Academy
87-180 Ala Akau St
Wai'anae, HI 96792
808-697-7110 (ext. 302)

Kristy Wisenbaker
2nd grade teacher

As I consider the suggestions about masks, desk distancing, and hybrid models that will effect our students, I have a few questions I ask myself: Will this improve the safety of our students? Will this be beneficial to the overall health and wellbeing of our students? Does this support our priorities as a public school? Based off of information I have read, conversations I have had, and personal experience, I come to these conclusions:

Will this improve the safety of our students? No. Knowing that children are largely unaffected by Covid, I believe that distancing and masks are not actually for their safety but out of concern that they could transfer the sickness to vulnerable individuals. Seems better in this case that those individuals take necessary precautions to protect themselves rather that expect hundreds to thousands of small children to carry that burden.

Will this be beneficial to the overall health and wellbeing of our students? No. Children developmentally need to interact with other children. By telling them to stay away from their friends and classmates or that they could hurt someone else by getting close will have lasting affects on their immediate mental and emotional health as well as their future social interactions.

Does this support our priorities as a public school? No. Public schools are a public service. As a public service, we need to be doing the job the community is expecting us to do. Parents rely on schools so they can go to work to support their families and provide other services to the greater community. Parents rely on us to teach and prepare their kids for the future. Schools need to do what taxpayers are paying them to do. Our economy will continue to be suppressed if parents are responsible to stay home and teach.

These are big decisions. Since immediate impacts to our students from Covid are minimal, we should not make decisions based off of uncertainties or fear. Instead, we need to support the overall wellbeing of our students and communities for the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jennifer Choo <jennifer.choo@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jennifer Choo; I am testifying against Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a special education teacher at Pearl City High School in a fully self contained classroom. I started teaching in 1998 and have experience teaching in general education, inclusion, resource and fully self contained settings. As a single parent,a teacher's pay is barely enough to make ends meet. My children have always sacrificed luxuries due to not having extra money, and having time with me since teaching is not simply an 8-3 job and I had to work a second job to help make ends meet. It was also difficult for my children to see me spend personal money on classroom supplies and educational material to meet each student's individual needs, when there was a list of things that they were dreaming of having. I was often tired and frustrated which I'm sure reflected on my patience and attitude at work, with the students, as well as with my family. The differential pay allowed me to continue supporting my student's needs without having an exhausting second job. The extra money lessened financial anxiety as well as provide more for my family. I could focus more time on curriculum planning, having the energy to execute lessons and enjoy my profession.

Now with the fear of Covid 19, our job as FSC teacher's in the high school setting is more important than ever. Half of my students are already adults who need to be prepared to be employed and lessen their financial dependence on our government and community. I am putting my own safety on the line, as it is my job to teach students how to adapt and follow these new norms to keep our community and themselves safe and healthy. The students that I have, although are young adults, have a difficult time to not "play" with their masks, washing their hands long enough and often enough, or using sanitizer after touching their nose, or putting their fingers in their mouths. They are at higher risk of exposure since as older teens/young adults, they are often out socializing in the community while demonstrating poor hygiene habits. We are told to be prepared to be put in quarantine should any of our students test "positive" or even if they begin to display cold/flu like symptoms. If I need to move my lessons to a virtual setting, my student's individual needs would require hours of additional planning as well as hours of 1:1 virtual contact with each student that will go way beyond a normal work day. This will affect my availability to hold a second job to make up for the loss of a differential, and will definitely impact whether or not continuing working for the DOE is possible. Questioning whether this job is "worth it" is something that no effective teacher should have on their mind as they enter a classroom. Our students deserve to have dedicated teachers who are focused on producing productive community contributors. It is the DOE's responsibility to support teacher's needs so that we can focus on our profession and be the quality educators our students deserve.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Choo

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concerned parent

Alyssa Silva <alyssa801@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Esteemed Board of Education Members,

I am the parent of a public high school student. I am very concerned about the plan that is in place for a return to school. Today is Monday, July 20th. As of right now, I know that my son's school chose the hybrid plan. However, I really do not know exactly what that means for my child. I have gotten a letter signed with all of the principals in our complex. It did not give me any clarification. I got another email last week saying that this week we would have "Zoom Coffee Hours" where we could talk about and ask questions. Well, it is Monday evening. One day down and no further information about the "Zoom Coffee Hours". Time is ticking away as anxiety keeps rising. I don't know what is going on! I do not want my child to go to school. We have family members who are at risk of covid 19 complications. I would like to opt for the distance learning option. However, I have been hearing rumors that we will not have that as an option or that the option is not flexible for parents. I have heard that if you opt for that then that is your kuleana and you live with that for the semester or year. What about if we have a vaccine? What if we find treatments that work well. I do not want to be pigeon holded into one decision. It should be based on the needs of each individual child. I feel that the board should be able to do that. This is what they ask of teachers daily…… be flexible, differentiate, do what you need to do for the children. It's time for members of the board to do a little of what is always asked of the teachers. Please think of your students. I ask that you slowly phase your students back into the classroom to ensure safety guidelines are in place. This will give our schools time to plan as well as delve into the distance learning training. Our children and our teachers should not be guinea pigs in the government's rush to restore the economy.

Mahalo,

Alyssa Silva

--
Alyssa Silva

Gmail

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

Teacher Shortage Differentials Testimony

Candice-Joy Soon <candice-joy.soon@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

My name is Candice Soon and I am writing to urge you to please continue funding for teacher shortage differentials. I am a special education teacher at Waipahu High School and teach 11th grade English.

As it stands, special education teachers occupy a very different space from other teachers. My workday schedule and duties are worlds apart from general education teachers; I have to do many things that other teachers do not. Some examples of such duties are: coordinating and attending IEP meetings, constant check-ins and communication with baselist parents, academic and behavioral input for students, and individualized accommodations and assignments for different students, to name a few. These responsibilities take a lot of time and I frequently stay way after regular school hours to complete all my work. Even with my prep periods, I find myself swamped with work. When I go home, I still end up working into the night with lesson plans, accommodations, and IEP paperwork. There is really no down time for any teacher, let alone a special education teacher. There are also special education teacher shortages in my school. so I end up doing double the work that should have been allocated to another SPED English teacher.

I frequently hear other teachers say to me that they would never want to be a special educator or want to do what I do. They mean this as a compliment and a testament to my patience and will, but it also serves as an acknowledgment of the massive workload I have. I love my students and am passionate about teaching, but the work feels so overwhelming at times. To add insult to injury, hearing about the possible loss of shortage differentials makes it seem like all the work we do is unappreciated. While I understand that the current situation has resulted in certain budget constraints, I do not believe it is fair to those of us who work so hard in positions that are not desirable.

Please reconsider the proposal to cut funding for the salary differentials. Teachers are already notoriously underpaid and overworked. These differentials help compensate for all the extra work SPED teachers put in on a daily basis, doing a job that other teachers do not want to do. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,
Candice

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

Phasing the opening of school

Dawn Shirota <dfaith808@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:33 PM
Reply-To: "dfaith808@yahoo.com" <dfaith808@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please consider phasing in the opening of schools as starting off with distance learning until it is completely safe for students to return to school . The numbers are higher now than when we initially shut down the schools. Our island of Maui will not have the capacity to care for a large outbreak . Thank you for your time.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Gmail

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

Testimony

Peggy Folker <peggyfolker@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne,
I am writing this email in regards to my concern as a parent, Hana resident, and teacher at Hana High and Elementary School about the proposal to discontinue the differentials for SPED, hard to staff, rural locations ,and Hawaiian immersion teachers. **I urge you to reject this proposal** as it will have years of negatively tiered affects in our community's public education system. We need all the help we can get out here -please do not take away from our qualified teachers! Our most veteran mentor teachers need encouragement to remain in the profession not more reasons to leave and retire right now.

Sincerely,
Peggy Folker
Hana Maui

Gmail

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Jayson Medeiros <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: BIGJAYSON@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:25 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Jayson Medeiros
Email	BIGJAYSON@GMAIL.COM
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. My wife supported teachers at her school by co-teaching online daily with students for 2 hours. I was laid off as a result of the pandemic. The shortage differential my wife recieved has helped us make ends meet Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

You can edit this submission and view all your submissions easily.

Gmail

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Shannon Rudolph <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: shannonkona@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:25 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Shannon Rudolph
Email	shannonkona@gmail.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Deborah Bond-Upson <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: deborah@learningbond.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:40 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Deborah Bond-Upson
Email	deborah@learningbond.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Alan Burdick <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: Burdick808@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:10 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Alan Burdick
Email	Burdick808@gmail.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Michele Matsuo <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: michelematsuo@yahoo.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:04 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Michele Matsuo
Email	michelematsuo@yahoo.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Marcia Linville <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: linvilleedcac253@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:08 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Marcia Linville
Email	linvilleedcac253@gmail.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Kaui Samson-Chong <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: jkchong43@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:10 PM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Kaui Samson-Chong
Email	jkchong43@gmail.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends. I'd like to add, this pay doesn't pertain to me right now as I'm currently going to school to be come a certified special education teacher. Though this pay doesn't pertain to me currently, it is something that is needed for what special education teachers do. Knowing that I have to return to school this year and ensure my students are being taught, I have no idea where my own keiki will be while I have to teach. It's a very difficult time for us as educators, knowing we have a job to fulfill yet our job as parents are

being sacrificed is very challenging. Now, to take away this shortage differential, please don't ever question why the retention of teachers is the way it is. I absolutely love what I do as a special educator, it's a very fulfilling job but not everyone is cut out for it.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Jason Bradshaw <noreply@jotform.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:22 PM
Reply-To: jasonwbradshaw@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Jason Bradshaw
Email	jasonwbradshaw@gmail.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Zahava Zaidoff <noreply@jotform.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:37 PM
Reply-To: zzaidoff@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Zahava Zaidoff
Email	zzaidoff@gmail.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Puamana Paikai <puamana@nawahi.org> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha kākou,

My name is Puamana Deal. I have been a teacher at Ke Kula ʻO Nāwahīokalaniʻōpuʻu in Keaʻau, Puna, Hawaiʻi for the past 16 years. I am writing in regards to Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone we need your supprt now more than ever! Please find another way to fix the budget, do not make teachers pay price!

Naʻu,
Na Puamana

Gmail

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

SPED DIFFERENTIALS

Claire Oshita <hello.claire567@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I oppose the SPED Differentials!! Do you realize regular Ed teachers have the SPED students 3/4 of the day with no aide??? Most or all schools have chosen the INCLUSION MODEL so a lot of SPED teachers are like teacher aides by going into the regular ed teacher's class.

SPED teachers have a very small class size, aide all day long, and prep time. Regular Ed teachers still attend multiple IEP meetings before/after school for students that are not in their class!! Where's the equity in giving them that substantial differential??

I had the most difficult SPED student in my class last year and had to deal with him 95% of the time.

If we can't even buy supplies, why should all that money go to a small percentage of teachers?? This differential is UNFAIR and sends the message to regular ed teachers that we don't do enough, whereas, our workload is heavier with no aide or prep time. We also have a major shortage of teachers!!

If emphasis is placed on SPED teachers, why would a parent of a gifted and talented student choose the public school system??

Do not fund the differentials!!

claire

claire

Testimony

Michele <mpksasaki@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:03 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Board of Education,

With just a couple of weeks left before the start of school, I would like to submit testimony voicing concerns about the COVID 19 Reopening Plans.

A press conference with the Superintendent and Governor was held on Monday, praising the opening of schools in a couple weeks. A rosy picture was painted, giving false hope and a fake impression to the public about the safety and health security of schools, with the reopening positioned as a gateway towards the eventual reopening of tourism. I am begging anyone in power to PLEASE LISTEN to those of us that are actually IN schools, trying to do our best for students, yet faltering and struggling. The truth is that we are NOT ready for students. There are too many questions and plans are not settled. We cannot and should not rush into reopening leaving some crucial decisions up to "let's try and see." This is NOT the time for trial and error. In a pandemic, uncertain safety plans or lack of plans can lead to dire consequences.

Administrators, faculty, and staff need more time for training and plan development. The consistency of safety and communication across the state is lacking. When you ask a person about the plans of schools in their community, the answers are vastly different. The gamut runs from communication of a few sentences to a letter of a couple of pages to a document several pages long. What does that say about our preparedness and the ability of our system to communicate and foster confidence and trust from the public? And any time a related question is posed to the Superintendent, her answer always points to principals. Principals are developing plans. Principals are to communicate to everyone. Principals have to make the schedules. Has anyone asked what support administrators had in creating all these plans and documents? None. NONE! Administrators are scrambling and overwhelmed. I am a teacher. A small group of teachers at my school are sitting with administration attempting to develop all these plans, procedures, and documents. Why are such life and death plans being left to us with no guidance?

While I support local communities having some control and voice in schools, this idea is vastly different when speaking about academic programs versus health and safety during a pandemic. During this time of COVID 19, schools need greater guidance and resources for plan development. Rather than each school reinventing the wheel or begging another school to "borrow" their plan, why hasn't the Department provided sample plans and/or ideas to work from? Why is there NO point of contact or resource to call when specific questions arise when attempting to figure out school procedures related to COVID? Administrators and teachers are not experts in public health! We are forced to devise detailed information and plans, yet we are in a situation of the blind leading the blind. We are doing our best, beyond our job duties, to devise these reopening plans but it is a guessing game as to what is the safest approach. Then you enter debates about the lack of manpower to pull off the safest options, the likelihood of close contact, deciding what compromising situation may be the lesser of two evils, etc. As a participant in these discussions, I am frustrated and angry that such important decisions have been tossed into our laps. Who will vet the plans to ensure there is sufficient safety? No one. Those in front of the camera will continue to paint idealistic pictures until something severe occurs, in which case they will blame the school (who lacked the expertise in the first place).

Besides a gap of leadership in safety plans, there is also insufficient staffing, equipment, and funding to ensure a safe learning environment. On Facebook, I came across a post by a teacher friend which included a link to a Go Fund Me such that her school could purchase tents to set up outdoor learning areas. Meanwhile, my school may need to beg our PTO for funds. Colleagues at school are already paying exorbitant out of pocket costs to purchase microphone systems for students to hear instructions as well as purchase supplies to build dividers and sneeze guards. Why are teachers bearing the burden of costs? Why do schools have to beg the public for money to be safe? If you dig deeper into these concerns, we should ask ourselves what systemic inequalities exist with these scenarios? Schools in higher socioeconomic areas may be able to raise money to meet costs for safety measures (although it's shameful that we need to beg for funds). Schools in low socioeconomic areas may ask the community for donations, and it will be unlikely that they see the same kind of support simply due to the economic status of the community. Are we gambling the safety of school facilities on how well schools can beg for money from the public or how much teachers are able to pull out of their own pocket?

Yes, we need students to return to school . . . .When HEALTH and SAFETY are assured! On behalf of teachers and other school staff, I beg for time, training, and resources. Solid, comprehensive safety plans need to be developed. Staff (teachers, office, custodians, cafeteria, educational assistants, etc.) must be given room to understand the plan, need to be sure facilities are set up with the correct parameters, must run through procedures and schedules to ensure movement, areas, and functions allow for health and safety that can be managed in a school day. Shift the student timeline. Delay the start of students. Have the adults return so they are afforded sufficient time and training to work on and work through the safety and distance learning measures. We need to be sure everything is set-up correctly and confidently to ensure safety for our students, families, and the wider community. We need to be certain our teachers have been trained, had time to practice, and are confident to meet student needs through distant learning measures. At what level of quality will we be opening our schools for students? Meets with Proficiency or better yet, Meets with Excellence? Or will we fall below the standard? In a pandemic, we cannot afford to take any missteps.

Thank you for reading through and taking my testimony into consideration. Please adjust the start date for students and be sure needs are met for school health and safety protocols.

Mahalo,
Michele Sasaki
Kindergarten Teacher and Association Policy Committee Chairperson
Hickam Elementary School
Honolulu, HI

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Jun Shin <noreply@jotform.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:23 PM
Reply-To: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Jun Shin
Email	junshinbusiness729@gmail.com
Subject	8082556663
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

You can edit this submission and view all your submissions easily.

Gmail

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

Question/Testimony

Kwai Mei Daugherty <meidaugherty71@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

After watching the press conference given today regarding the reopening of schools I was concerned. Watching the news here and around the United States it seems clear that almost every educational institution or childcare provider has strict entrance protocols in place for children arriving on campus, including having a closed campus and temperature screenings upon entering. Yet, these measures are not being implemented at our schools. Even if temperature screenings are not always effective, having control over entrance to campus and health monitoring by dedicated staff every morning, is a low-cost and effective way to keep more students and staff healthy and safe.

In addition, on a separate issue, I just wanted the board to know that primary grades do not have a reduced number of students in the classroom. Actually, I have more students on my class list for this upcoming year than last year. Almost all furniture except for student desks has been removed. The class size reduction affects larger classes in upper grades that are moving to an AB schedule. This seems contrary to what I see being recommended in the news as I try to implement strict health and safety procedures. Here is a reference article/video segment on effective practices that addresses these two issues and provides a model: https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/20/us/child-care-for-essential-workers-lessons-wellness/index.html
That being said, I am very grateful that HIDOE was able to confirm that they will follow the agreement they signed in the Memorandum of Understanding with HSTA that there will be 6 feet of space in between student desks. Teachers appreciate your support.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,
Kwai Daugherty
1st grade Teacher
Waiau Elementary
Pearl City

Gmail

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

Testimony for school phased in reopening, masking and ventilation changes

syan Krusa <stephanieroseyan@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

We understand the amount of time, effort and collective brain power behind your recommendations for schools reopening. I just have a few questions:

What is the plan for students who have at-risk family members- any distance learning or home study options? How long do you expect students to stay out of school when sick and how many tests would they need to be able to go back to school and will they be able to go back to school with or without symptoms when they have tested negative ? Why isn't distance learning an option for families who aren't prepared to have their kids go back to school and for teachers who also don't feel safe so that it leaves more space for those students who don't have a choice but to go to face-to-face schooling?

How come there was no teacher/parent conference about choices for reopening and it felt like there was an immediate decision to reopen face-to-face schooling without getting the stakeholders involved in these decisions (the parents and teachers to talk together)? Have there been anonymous surveys to teachers and parents on what their risk tolerance is for reopening? We want to make sure that all teachers that will teach our child feels safe with reopening, have there been anonymous surveys to teachers and what were the results-AAP recently walked back on their reopening recommendations and included that all stakeholders especially teachers get seats at the decision table? Do your teachers feel trained and prepared to protect themselves and their students as well as trained in decontamination of masks and shields and cleaning surfaces? The previous AAP guidance was criticized for saying little about the safety of educators and other school personnel. Friday's statement (from AAP), cosigned by the two national teacher unions and AASA, the School Superintendents Association, calls for putting educators as well as other stakeholders at the center of decision-making. https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/07/10/889848834/nations-pediatricians-walk-back-support-for-in-person-school

What are the plans for quarantine and testing if a student or teacher gets sick, will it be a whole class, or the whole lunch "Ohana" group tested? who will be quarantined-the class or the school, given there are shared lunches? What capacity do you have or put in place to know quickly when an outbreak occurs- it took DOH 2-3 weeks to identify the cluster in Maui Memorial Medical Center, we would hate for this to happen in our schools. Will there be school-based testing (with rapid turn around), contact tracing and isolation/quarantine support? that seems straightforward, but it is not. The community does not yet have adequate testing, contact tracing or isolation especially when the tourists come. Schools currently have nothing, and this is not well described in your plans either. When cases continue to skyrocket on the mainland, we will be competing for test kits and reagents again, so we can't really guarantee supply and testing capability. How do you ensure that the teachers/students are quickly tested and what does "severe mean" . There was a case study on a school in Israel which closed too late and already 100 students were positive by the time they closed. What is the number of positives will you need to go to distance learning?

The 3 ft distancing rule is used in your reopening plan without mention of changes in ventilation or open doors and windows? I know you have taken this from AAP but even AAP doesn't have science to back this up. 3 ft with kids forward facing is actually not how the mask protects, mask protects the person in front of you and can't protect the person on the sides. In surgery, we face the patient, when we cough or sneeze to keep the sterile field sterile, so it is misguided to say 3ft distancing and facing forward is enough.

There is no mention of ventilation improvements or changes to open air classrooms in your reopening plans. The National Academies of Science, Engineer and Medicien and CDC places emphasis on this and this is very doable in a place like Hawaii. "

Reorganize classrooms to enable physical distancing, such as by limiting class sizes or moving instruction to larger spaces. The report says cohorting, when a group of 10 students or less stay with the same staff as much as possible, is a promising strategy for physical distancing.

Prioritize cleaning, ventilation, and air filtration, while recognizing that these alone will not sufficiently lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission." https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/07/schools-should-prioritize-reopening-in-fall-2020-especially-for-grades-k-5-while-weighing-risks-and-benefits

Recently the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine have recommended surgical masks and shields for teachers, will your teachers have access to surgical masks and shields? Do the teachers have adequate and proper PPE and good supply of it for the school? https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/07/schools-should-prioritize-reopening-in-fall-2020-especially-for-grades-k-5-while-weighing-risks-and-benefits

How stable do you think classrooms will be if teachers have to go on and off quarantine? As childcare isn't easy on Maui, it might also create instability of parents who need to make childcare arrangements on intermittent basis versus on a designated, continuous time-frame basis? What does the supply of substitute teachers look like in your pool? Many in the public system are saying that many substitutes are not choosing to sub at this time. What of the quality and stability of education then?

What is the plan beyond reopening? What if you are wrong? What support will you give teachers and students who are affected by COVID19 if you are wrong?

How will you know that things are going well?

Will the school advocate for the city and state government to ensure testing availability and robust contact tracing and quarantine of positive individuals because unless the community is safe from COVID19, the school is not safe no matter what measures are put in place?

There are many different types of students (IEP students for instance or younger students) who benefit greatly from face-to-face interaction,but intermediate and high school students are pretty cognitively robust at this point and having a phased in period with distance learning for 1-3 months is not going to be a big drawback in the long term. Why the rush to get back to normal when things are not yet normal and we have not seen what full reopening the economy looks like?

Ultimately, when I look at the decision about school as both parent and doctor, I see that the risks of opening are uncertain, but the benefits are clear. We need to reopen, but eventually.
We could be wrong about schools reopening too early, why not consider a phased approach like the Milwaukee school district.

https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/madison/education/2020/07/17/mps-board-has-made-a-decision-to-begin-school-in-a-phased-approach-#:~:text=In%20a%20six%2Dhour%2Dlong,a%20phased%20approach%2C%20starting%20virtually.&text=This%20means%20school%20will%20begin,face%20to%20face%20from%20there.

August and September (even October) could be distance learning and then will have two to four COVID19 cycles worth of data (especially in Sept when tourists are slated to come without 14 day quarantine requirements) to see if transmission in the community is increasing with people becoming lax with social distancing and with opening up the community to transpacific travelers without the quarantine deterrent.

Then November, there should be a re-evaluation of community spread, to see if the controls put up by the city and state are working. Why isn't there a period like this in your plan? We may be in a low prevalence state now but cases are rising. Community infections are increasing. Even one teacher or one student yearbook memorial at the end of the school year is not worth not having a waiting or phased in period, then at least you can say that you have tried everything to mitigate the risk of infection.

Given that COVID-19 hasn't been in humans for long enough to know all of the long term repercussions and sequelae, and considering that we are now just beginning to understand how Multi Inflammatory System in both children and adults is manifesting, it seems prudent to err on the side of safety. We want to stress that we agreed with most of your careful reopening plans, but question the timing and the lack of an initial phase before the full reopening of school and/or the lack of hybrid approach for different types of circumstances in the initial phase.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. And thank you again for all the time consuming efforts that you have made thus far.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Stephanie Yan, MD

Data:

https://www.massgeneral.org/assets/MGH/pdf/medicine/infectious-diseases/COVID-19%20School%20and%20Community%20Resource%20Library_July%206%202020.pdf#page30

Data on MIS-C (which has been known by several other acronyms, including PIMS and PMIS), exist primarily in the form of cases series. There are several commonalities among these reports: the mean age of patients is 8-10 years, one-half to three-quarters of children have impaired left ventricular function or myocarditis, and around half require inotrope/vasopressor support. The percent of children requiring mechanical ventilation ranges from none to about one half in different series. Some series have described a high percentage of affected children with African ancestry (24-57% in series that reported this information). Medical comorbidities seem to be less common than for children with severe respiratory COVID-19 (52-93% previously healthy in three series that reported this information). Although some series have reported a few deaths, the majority of children recovered and were discharged from the hospital (my addition, long term sequelae unknown). The following case series were reviewed, with pertinent findings noted:

● Feldstein et al., 6/29/20, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in U.S. Children and Adolescents. ○ 186 children in 26 US states; four deaths.

● Dufort et al., 6/29/29, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children in New York State. ○ 99 children in New York state; two deaths.

● Cheung et al., 6/8/20, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome Related to COVID-19 in Previously Healthy Children and Adolescents in New York City. ○ 17 children in NYC; no deaths.

● Kaushik et al., 6/14/20, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) Associated With SARS-CoV-2 Infection: A Multi-institutional Study From New York City. ○ 33 children in NYC; one death.

● Whittaker et al., 6/8/20, Clinical Characteristics of 58 Children With a Pediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome Temporally Associated With SARS-CoV-2. ○ 58 children in England; one death.

● Belot et al., June 2020, SARS-CoV-2-related Paediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome, an Epidemiological Study, France, 1 March to 17 May 2020. ○ 108 children in Paris; one death.

● Ramcharan et al., 6/12/20, Paediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome: Temporally Associated With SARS-CoV-2 (PIMS-TS): Cardiac Features, Management and Short-Term Outcomes at a UK Tertiary Paediatric Hospital. ○ 15 children in the UK; no deaths.

● Toubiana et al., 6/3/20, Kawasaki-like Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children During the covid-19 Pandemic in Paris, France: Prospective Observational Study. ○ 21 children in Paris; no deaths.

Anecdotal and Lay Reports as Schools and Daycare Centers Re-open ● Oster, Emily, 7/5/20, Child Care Open in Pandemic: Data ○ Voluntary survey data from Dr. Emily Oster at Brown. As of June 25, approximately 0.15% of students and 0.1.1% of staff became infected. ● Pierre, Jon, 6/19/20, (policy summary published June 2020), Nudges Against Pandemics: Sweden's COVID-19 Containment Strategy in Perspective ○ Sweden's experience: the only European country that did not close schools. May be a source of data on transmission in schools in the future; none to date. ● Crawfurd et al., 6/12/20, (study period June 2020), Back to School: An Update on COVID Cases as Schools Reopen ○ This website, which tracks cases in different countries as schools reopen, will provide some data, but it does not incorporate other country-wide trends. ● Lampert, Allison, 6/16/20, (study period ongoing), In Canada's COVID-19

Capital, Younger Students Return to Class in 'Bubbles' ○ Description of Canada's plans to reopen schools with small groups ● Taylor, Adam, 6/5/2020, How Countries are Preparing to Reopen Schools after Coronavirus Lockdowns. ○ Washington Post overview ● Lapierre, Matthew, 6/4/20, Coronavirus Infects Nine of 11 Students in Trois-Rivières Classroom ○ From the Montreal Gazette, June 4: "Almost an entire class of students caught coronavirus at a Trois-Rivières school" ■ Very little information provided: importantly, not reported how old these children were ■ Emphasizes that outbreaks will be inevitable and plans must be in place to address them proactively. ● Swaby, Aliyya, 6/23/20, Coronavirus Cases are Increasing at Texas Child Care Centers, but the State Repealed Safety Rules ○ Texas daycares are permitted to open without safety measures (no outcome data): ● Kamenetz, Anya, 6/24/20, What Schools Can Learn From Child Care Coronavirus Safety Plans ○ National YMCA and NY Dept of Education experience with childcare centers for essential workers: Isolated cases, but no records of more than one case at a site. ● EdSource (Burke and Xie), 6/30/20, How schools across the globe are reopening amid the coronavirus pandemic ● Monahan, Willamette Week, 6/30/20, Oregon Child Care Center Has at Least 20 COVID-19 Cases, Eight of Them Kids ○ A child care center is the first in Oregon to experience a publicly reported outbreak of COVID-19, with 8children and 12 teachers testing positive. The DPH told the press that there are cases involving family members as well, but declined to say how large the outbreak is. ● Stub, Sara Toth, 6/24/20: Israel's Schools Struggle With Reopening Amid Coronavirus Pandemic ○ Concerns voiced as Israel plans school opening ● Jones, John, 6/24/20, COVID-19 Rocks Pine Cove With Jump in Positive Cases ○ Difficulty with COVID control in sleepaway camps

5. Most school reopening plans contain some type of hybrid or option for distance learning.

State, National, and Society Guidance A. US Government and State guidelines ● US CDC, 5/19/20, Considerations for Schools ○ The CDC guidelines are the most comprehensive and detailed on considerations for K-12 schools. These guidelines emphasize that "Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community." ○ They promote staying home of employees and students when appropriate, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, cloth face coverings, adequate supplies (e.g., hand sanitizer), signage and messaging on recommended behaviors, cleaning and disinfection, modified layouts, adequate ventilation, and partnerships with local health officials for case reporting, among other recommendations. ● Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), 6/5/20, Guidance on Required Safety Supplies for Reopening Schools. ○ These guidelines recommend similar practices and recommend physical distancing of at least 6 feet at all times, smaller groups of students assigned to one teacher, and isolation and discharge protocols for students who may become ill during the school day. ■ Brief CBS news summary of the 6/5/20 document (CBS): Fall Reopening Memo for Massachusetts Schools: Masks Required, Limit Class Size to 10 ○ Additional info is at the MA DESE COVID-19 information and resources webpage. (6/24/20) COVID-19 Information and Resources ● Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), 6/25/20, Initial Fall Reopening Guidelines ○ The Massachusetts DESE Guidelines' recent version removes the guidance on groups of 10 people or less, offer 3' instead of 6' distancing when masks are used, provide funding for schools to implement new measures, offer 3 models of in-person, hybrid, and remote learning, emphasize the ideal goal of 5-day-a-week in-person learning, and underscore the importance of access to in-person schooling to improve equity and permit anti-racism education to equip students to create the change that is needed today in the world. ● Massachusetts Higher Education Working Group, 5/22/20, SAFE ON CAMPUS: A FRAMEWORK FOR REOPENING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS HIGHER EDUCAT. ○ The Massachusetts Higher Education Working Group outlines a phased approach to re-opening colleges and universities with the goal of achieving a "New Normal" at its conclusion. ○ Here is a brief CBS news summary of the 5/22/20 document: Proposed Reopening Plan For Massachusetts Colleges Would 'Carefully Repopulate' Campuses ● California Department of Education, 6/8/20, Stronger Together - Health Services & School Nursing ● State of Michigan, 6/30/20, MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020- 21 Return to School Roadmap ● Santa Clara County, CA: Coronavirus and Schools (includes summer camps and other links) ○ K-12 School Guidance: Reopening of Santa Clara County K-12 Schools ■ Detailed information on distancing, masks, cleaning, busses, monitoring, and response to cases and contacts ● Connecticut State Department of Education, 7/5/20: Reimagining CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning ○ Governor Lamont's announcement, 6/25/20: Governor Lamont Announces Plans for the 2020-21 School Year Amid the Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic ■ A framework to allow all students the opportunity to have access to in-school, full-time instruction at the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year, as long as public health data continues to support this model. ● North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 6/26/20, Interim Guidance for Day Camp or Program Settings Serving Children and Teens ○ North Carolina Day Camps. Includes fairly specific recommendations on how to handle cases

Gmail

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

Testimony

Malia Mataele <maliamataele@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:50 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kākou,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff locations, and Hawaiian immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Malia Mataele. I have been teaching in the Hawaiian immersion program at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ʻo Pūʻōhala since 1996.

As a Hawaiian immersion teacher, I am constantly creating quality curriculum for every subject. Every time I participate in another PD, I have to translate or create curriculum learned at the PD before I can even use it in my classroom. During this COVID-19 pandemic, English medium teachers were able to use many different English medium resources for their distance learning. Hawaiian immersion teachers could not use these English medium resources. We had to create our own online curriculum daily. This was extremely difficult during the school closure in 4th quarter. I am really concerned about the upcoming school year. Parents are able to opt-out of our model B school plan. They are able to choose distance learning. The state purchased an English medium curriculum for teachers to use during distance learning. Hawaiian immersion teachers still need to create all of our lessons online. We will not be able to use the state purchased curriculum. Therefore we need to plan and teach in-person and create distance learning lessons online daily. We are doing the work of two people.

The Board of Education approved paying shortage differentials to ease our critical teacher shortage. They also pledged to fund the differentials if state lawmakers did not fund it for the next school year. I appreciated the well-deserved differential which started in January. This current proposal breaks the Board of Education's pledge. This retraction would negatively impact the Hawaiian immersion program, the teachers, the students, and me. During this COVID-19 pandemic, the government shut down all business, and only allowed essential businesses to operate. All teachers were forced to teach distance learning from home. We are the frontline of education. Are we essential? Who decides that? Very few people are qualified to educate the Hawaiian immersion students in our official language. Our Hawaiian immersion students deserve a quality education too. I strongly urge board members to reject this proposal.

Mahalo nui loa,
Mary K P Mataele

Gmail

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

Testimony

Mikaella Gowan <mikaella@hawaii.edu> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha kākou,
I am writing to you to testify on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a Hawaiian Immersion Teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ʻo Waiau, where two of my three daughters are students. I understand that times are incredibly tough right now but I wanted to provide insight as to how much extra work is embedded into our position as a Kaiapuni teacher. When schools were shut down in March and turned into distance enrichment programs, Kaiapuni teachers created online resources for our students, daily. Our students do not have access to programs like iReady, which is what many teachers were able to use to help keep their students on track. There are no full-Hawaiian language educational programs available at the moment, so any distance teaching that we do, needs to be created from scratch. With that said, you can imagine how much we are stressing out as we scramble to create enough online content for our students who have chosen distance learning, while also preparing for our in-person instruction students as we head back to school. Even with the most supportive administration leading us (which we luckily have at Waiau), we are still overwhelmed with what needs to be done to support our students and families. We love our job, we are passionate about what we do, our students and their families become a part of our family. But we cannot continue to put in all of the extra work we do with zero compensation.

Please do not discontinue the extra compensation for this coming school year.

Mahalo nui for your time.

Naʻu me ka haʻahaʻa,
Mikaella Kanoe Gowan

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

Teacher Differentials

STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE <stephenieblakemore@sbcglobal.net> Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 10:30 AM
Reply-To: "kndlve22@gmail.com" <kndlve22@gmail.com>
To: "testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us" <testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>, Governor David Ige <governor.ige@hawaii.gov>

Aloha

To hear that there is a motion to temporarily suspend the state approved payment of differentials to teachers who work above and beyond contractual expectations in hard to fill openings is yet another slap in the face to our most vulnerable keiki, their families and those teachers.

Three weeks before the start of our school year, in a fiscal year already underway, and the costs of providing a high quality public education is going to be addressed by breaking your promise to those teachers in hard to fill teaching positions that they will be compensated for going the extra mile to be sure all of Hawaii's students have equitable access to a public education that is worthy of the promise that all keiki will be served and served well by the HIDOE system. Shame on you for even considering this.

Teachers in hard to fill positions work long hours, well beyond what is expected or recognized, in order to ensure the students get what they need. The efforts of these teachers save the state millions of dollars simply by going above and beyond what is a reasonable work day. In special education alone these efforts ensure that the state will not pay for costly legal actions or be penalized on recieving federal funds for failure to provide services as mandated by Federal law. The teacher paperwork in SpEd is great enough that it has been recognized that subs are needed in the classroom so that teachers can address the paperwork and attend extra meetings that no other teaching position must address. Special education teachers are doing this paperwork with fidelity, intelligence and dilligence and doing this in addition to being in the classroom and teaching like few other teachers are trained to do. The teachers make this happen. Not the bureacrats, the teachers.

These are hard to fill positions because it is hard to find teachers with both the qualifications and the dedication. You need both . You are undermining the dedication part by considering the suspension of differentials. That is a breach of trust that will not be easily repaired. More teachers will leave these positions and then more pressure will be placed on the public school system to fullfill its promises to the community and meet the mandates from federal and state oversights that impact the financial health of the HIDOE.

Don't step on a dollar to pick up a penny. If you need to cut spending look at making cuts in the bloated bureacracy that does less for our schools than teachers who are working in hard to fill positions. (By the way, some of those cuts could mean there will be more available teachers who need jobs.) Keep differentials for hard to fill teaching positions. Keep your promises. All of our keiki deserve to thrive.

Mahalo
Stephenie Blakemore
Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android

****
This email was scanned by the Cisco IronPort Email Security System contracted by the Hawaii Dept of Education. If you receive suspicious/phish email, forward a copy to **phishing-report@k12.hi.us**. This helps us monitor suspicious/phish email getting thru. You will not receive a response, but rest assured the information received will help to build additional protection.
****

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

Teachers derserve PD credit towards increases in salary

STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE <stephenieblakemore@sbcglobal.net> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:46 AM
Reply-To: "kndlve22@gmail.com" <kndlve22@gmail.com>
To: "testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us" <testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>

Aloha
This summer, and during the 4th quarter many teachers have taken it upon themselves to participate in professional webinars being offered through many educational organizations, such as edWeb, K12 Classrooms, the Council for Exceptional Children, DOE, OSEP and Harvard School of Graduate Education.
Teachers who have taken this initiative deserve to recive PD3 credits that count towards moving up along the step ladder towards salary increases.
Planning and professional development that improves the safety and effective delivery of instruction has been minimal from the HIDOE and their own PD 3 course offerings during the pandemic. One day of three 2 hour Google classroom sessions from HIDOE is not enough, and there were far better offerings on the same topic outside of HIDOE offerings.
The HIDOE did not even offer courses partnering with the U of H to help teachers find online course work during the summer. How could the two major educational organizations in the state, funded through taxpayers, fail all of us so completely?
The need for such professional development should have been more than apparent as teachers and families struggled through a sudden change in how public education is delivered during the 4th quarter of the 2019-2020 SY.
Teachers who have cared enough to about being professionals have found their own online professional development and should be thanked in a way that means something. These teachers are self directed lifelong learners, their actions model the very core of what we hope our efforts in the classroon will instill in our students. These teachers deserve to get professional development credits from the HIDOE that will increase their salary.
Mahalo

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android

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Gmail

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

Testimony

Allison Kohlhepp <akohlhep@icloud.com> Sun, Jul 19, 2020 at 11:21 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony regarding Action Item G: Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for

Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical

Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021

School Year

My name is Allison Kohlhepp and I work at Hanalei Elementary School on Kauai. I am currently receiving a differential and it is what enabled me to continue to staying in special education. I am dual certified and qualified to teach general education and could easily teach in a location closer to home but decided I could afford to continue in special education and make the commute to work at this school. Our school is currently looking to fill a second special education teacher position and we will not be able to fill it without the differential. The cost of living on the island is so expensive that most teachers can't afford to teach and especially at Hanalei Elementary School which is located on the north side of the island. Even general education teachers struggle to be able to support their families and most work second and third jobs. This is often impossible for a special education teacher who works much longer hours conducting IEP meetings and keeping up with the required paperwork. I can't tell you how many special education teachers go back to either a different profession or back into a general education position because of the amount of extra work and inability to be able to work a second job. There is also the constant stress of the legal liability if you make a mistake on any part of the process and related paperwork. The differential allows special education teachers to more easily keep their position as it lessens the burden of financially being able to meet the costs of living on the island. If the differential is removed it sends the message that we are not worth the effort and do not deserve the proper support to do our jobs and many of us will be forced to work in a position that is substantially less stressful and this will negatively impact the special needs students and families we are attempting to serve. Please do not STOP funding the differential. This differential is the ONLY good thing that has happened that has made doing this extremely challenging profession a bit easier as it lessens the financial burden on the teachers who are expected to be servicing our most vulnerable student population. Please do not send this message that you do not understand or care about these teachers and the children they service! It is not for the faint of heart but teachers also have families they have to support and consider their own health and well being. It makes is so much easier, without any added incentive e.g. the differential, for a teacher to turn down a special education position or go back into the regular classroom than spend long hours doing paperwork, conducting stressful meetings with families and working with students who are extremely challenging. Do the right thing and VOTE YES to keep funding the differentials! PLEASE!!!

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING ACTION ITEM G: BOARD ACTION ON TEMPORARY DISCONTINUANCE OF EXTRA COMPENSATION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION, HARD-TO-STAFF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS, AND HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

JULY 23, 2020 · HAWAI'I STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION · CHAIR CATHERINE PAYNE

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds.

Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming (and utterly offensive) threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse.

According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations.

Kris Coffield, Chair · David Negaard, Vice Chair · Jun Shin, Secretary · Amber Adjuja, Treasurer ·
Marcia Linville, Non-Male SCC Representative · Justin Hughey, Non-Female SCC Representative

In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Postpone school opening

Alice <ayzuls@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 2:25 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Please please postpone the start of school until after Labor Day.

Teachers are not ready and as a parent, I still have to figure out what classes are not being offered virtually, etc.

Just treat this school with shorter breaks and not year-round school year....for the students, teachers and parents....

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Dayna Fukushima <daynalynn1021@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**. My name is Dayna Gemeno and I am a special education teacher at Kipapa Elementary School. My children attend Mililani Middle School and Kipapa Elementary School.

I have been teaching in special education for 13 years and was grateful to receive the differential. It was reassuring to know that special educators are finally being recognized for all their hard work over the years. Everyone knows that special education falls on the back burner with no budget for staffing and support, leaving classroom teachers with overcrowded classrooms and high caseloads. Not to mention all the hours sped teachers spend on additional meetings and IEP paperwork. These last few years have been tough, but this last quarter was the hardest. Teaching through distance learning, conducting virtual IEP meetings, grading 4th quarter grades, documenting a communication and service log for each student, creating individual student plans, and letters to parents was something that general education teacher did not have to do. It's hard to believe that you would go back on a promise after enduring the worst quarter of my teaching career! I'm not sure that I have it in me to endure another school year teaching long distance without the differential.

The differential has been tremendously helpful as my husband has taken a new job with decreased pay, making me the bread winner. Yikes! I'm not sure how we're going to make our monthly payments if the differentials are taken away. According to the department's data, the differentials worked. I was surprised to see how it made a difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in the hard to fill positions.

Taking back the differentials is the wrong decision as it will greatly affect our children. With the pandemic, we are losing many valuable veteran teachers to retirement. We need incentives to keep experienced teachers to stay in the field. I am always looking for options to leave teaching because of the stress that affects my health and well being. Please keep the differential as an incentive for me to stay in teaching.

Sincerely,
Dayna Gemeno

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Keep the schools closed for the sake of our children, teachers, admin, school personnel.

amosa amosa <coachamosax2@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 5:51 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm a teacher, parent, coach. You guys might look at our numbers on our island in comparison to other stated and might say it's not as bad but this pandemic is deadly. I've had 4 relatives died from the covid19 and they were very healthy people and below 60 years of age. So i know first hand how deadly this virus is. To allow my children to go to school where so many students will not follow guidelines is murderous. I'm a teacher and i can honestly say if high school students have a hard time following a uniform policy what guarantee you can give us that all these guidelines will be followed. It will be another burden put on the teachers besides teaching their subjects. This pendemic calls for a change in our educational system. It's time to go thru technology to teach our kids it's the next step to educate our kids in the high tech society that we're moving towards. Please keep schools closed for the sake of our kids.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening schools

Jacob Cassens <mistercassens@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:42 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,

I'm pretty sure you have all heard about the lawsuits and unions standing up and saying no to in school learning across the country right now. It's time you stepped up and do the right thing before your hand is forced.

You will look infinitely better preventing even one death or a spike in cases than you will with even one person's blood on your hands.

You get to go have your meetings in your small groups, safety precautions in place, while our school isn't even checking temperatures or creating a 14 day isolation plan in case of student or teacher illness. We are not being provided with adequate safety measures, and our kids are getting crammed into classrooms.

You have the responsibility to make sure education is handled correctly. No one. I repeat, no one in this state is going to prepare for distance learning churchly I correctly until you step up and tell them to, and that it is the only responsible option.

Studies out of Israel show reinfection is completely possible now. Studies in Korea and other places show that middle school and high school students are more prolific in transmitting the illness than adults. And you're sending them into the incubator.

History will not be kind to you if you don't stop this now. The current political climate is not what you need to be listening to. We don't look back and excuse Hitler's command staff for not standing up to him. We call them cowards and remind ourselves that in our situation we would do better. We would be better.

The data is there. We don't know enough to open schools safely, and we shouldn't risk even one life. Teachers and students should be working remotely. I'll be wearing my own purchased face shield, n95 masks, gloves, and layers. I have to make a decontamination station at my front door so I don't bring anything in to my nana and my parents.

I have to set up isolation and laundry in a way that doesn't share potential contamination. Most of our kids? They aren't going to be able to do that. Not going to be able to do anything like that. How many of them wear the same clothes to school every day? How many of them have compromised immune systems from malnourishment and unhealthy lifestyles because of their SES.

You are sentencing someone to death. We don't know who yet. But someone. And I'll never let you forget it when it happens. You can count on that. I hope their faces haunt your dreams, and that you cry to sleep at night thinking of the lives you took. A person who values human life would. Or is this the wrong audience?

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please push back the face to face start day for students

Melody Zeitler <ms.melodyzeitler@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 6:56 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us

Aloha,
As a concerned teacher I strongly believe that schools need more time to ready their schools and faculty for reopening to students. Today I went into my classroom and arranged my furniture to fit the social distancing guidelines.

I learned today that the start date of schools is based on a decision made 3 years ago. It seems that, considering we are in the middle of a pandemic, with numbers rising and community spread looming, we should at least reconsider a decision that lacks consideration of the Pandemic.

In the press conference today I heard what I have been feeling. That the state is eager to get kids back to school so that teachers can build relationships with students and get them trained with an online platform so that we can be better prepared for when school starts to see COVID cases and shut down again. I don't think this is a terrible idea but I do think that we could take a week or two to allow schools to plan for this new system of delivery. I don't think that safety is the number one factor here and I don't think it's good enough.

I participated in the opening planning at my school and did not feel that the school was ready to truly follow the cleaning guidelines, nobody has started an honest conversation about how we manage our bathrooms, and we are unclear on the rules and regulations around students on the roster but not present in the classroom. Now that masks are required will there be some sort of plan for dealing with students that refuse to wear them?

I have concerns about subs. What is the sub protocol? There seem to be a lot of unanswered questions and I think that the teachers, students, and all other employees of the school deserve to have more answers than questions.

Thank you for your consideration,
Melody Zeitler

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

School Opening Date

Banner Fanene <banner4senate@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:19 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, Catherine.Payne@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us
Cc: Banner Fanene <banner_fanene@yahoo.com>

Aloha -

Please do not open school in August. First week of January would be safer for Students and Teachers.

Mahalo,
Banner S Fanene
Hawaii Resident

Testimony

Rhonda Comet <rhondacomet@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 7:26 PM
To: doeinfo@k12.hi.us, boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education in our great state of Hawaii:

The data confirms that our Keiki did much better with qualified teachers in our inclusion rooms due to differential pay bringing in needed highly qualified educational instructors. Why would we tragically take this away from our Keiki at Lahaina Intermediate School that is historically a Title I school? Our TEACHERS ARE LEAVING, we need them here to increase educational scores throughout the state. Do not allow a temporary discontinuance or any discontinuance of the differentials when our Keiki need more support not less in these extraordinarily challenging times due to COVID-19. It would be cruel to Keiki, teachers, economy, and our communities to do so.

I have taught for five years in Hawaii and I am a Special Education teacher in a hard-to-staff area at Lahaina Intermediate School on island of Maui. We rarely have enough Special education teachers, yet due to these harsh possible measures, I will not stay in Lahaina, I will find a content area in which to teach and get out of special education, or I can take my license to another state.

I understand the need for the State of Hawaii to balance budgets, yet has any financial person thought about how hitting one of the only stable incomes in the state could affect the economy in all communities here? Balancing budgets for any financial plan must include the movement of money. If teachers have no money to move, it will decimate the economy of Hawaii, it is the wrong choice in the bigger picture. People will move away and make our great state stagnate.

Cutting pay on teachers also means the communities, who have historically suffered, will continue to suffer from greater educational consequences. This TOO is a greater financial consequence as these students become active adult members of our local society. We simply can not go in the opposite direction. We must move forward and not allow this to take place.

As I watched the state Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 hearing to discuss SY2020–21 and the reopening of school campuses, I was appalled. I heard that teachers were fine with returning to school and no one was leaving. I know of four teachers on my campus clearly deciding to retire, leave, or move into another profession. We are not prepared. DHS did not relieve my concerns about what to do in the event a student has a serious illness and I did not see a plan in place for any such COVID illness. I and many of my colleagues are scared. Without proper protocols in place, teachers are making the decision easy to retire early or leave the island to pursue something else or go where there are proper protocols in other states' public systems that do exist.

During the committee hearing, a comment from a summer school special education teacher said that administrators did not check on her one time over the summer, thus the data Kishimoto touted as "summer schools were successful" is not accurate or verified. One comment is quoted here:

"Utterly disgusting of HIDOE! Many of us SPED teachers have been working all summer with no safeguards and guidelines in place. Putting ourselves and our families at risk every day!! Enough is enough! I'm ready to quit and take my expertise, dedication, love, and passion to somewhere it will be appreciated and appropriately compensated. I feel like I've been drowning for the past 16 years in this field. The kids lost an amazing SPED teacher when my husband left 2 years ago, and they will lose another....."

I am beseeching you to consider all the words of every teacher that is scared with loving big hearts for their concern of Keiki, self, family, and community. I personally ask for more time to be better prepared safely by working with my school to work on safety protocols and distance learning. I personally ask that you consider not pulling salaries away as we have MORE work cut out for special education teachers in the way of assessments, etc.... We really can not take on more stress as teachers. Our community can not manage more stress. You do not want to be one of the reasons for that added burden. Help us help our communities in the great State of Hawai‘i.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration to this matter.

Rhonda Comet
Special Education Inclusion Teacher
Lahaina Intermediate School

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Schools reopening

Teacher Rights 808 <teachpower808@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:19 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Well now you've gone and done it.

Have you ever seen middle school and high school kids when they can't socialize and they're stuck in the same room all day?

This isn't to build relationships and you know it. It's to reopen the economy. And human sacrifice is okay with you.

Students are supposed to get to know their teacher behind two face masks, a face shield, gloves (all provided by themselves by the way) and build relationships like that?

How about you let them see their teacher's smiling face online and give them that chance to build relationships.

Just because you have no idea how social media and the internet age works or how used to it kids are, doesn't mean it's a bad way to get to know each other.

The kids live like that. This is the chance to let us into their world and give the kids the chance to show us what they know. Problem solve, find solutions to problems instead of stupid worthless standardized tests.

This is the chance to get teachers in Hawaii up to speed with the rest of the world. We are light years behind here. Light years. You guys have no idea how backwards it is here. I've worked at title 1 schools in the mainland with better technological integrations than the best schools here. Because the district pushed and centralized and trained people.

The kids will be fine learning online for a while. It's not ideal. I'll miss them. But I'd rather that than go to one funeral. One teacher's funeral.

And you know what? All the research shows that kids are better able to engage and critically think online because they're but being stifled by an antiquated situation.

You folks might not understand the technology, but teachers can learn. The kids already know. Be better. Do better.

Our group expects better from you. Parents. Teachers. Principals. ACLU. All of us. We will hold you accountable.

Did you sign your death waiver when you went to work today? How many kids need to get sick or die to change your mind. We can talk more when that happens.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Concerns about school re-opening for Aug. 4, 2020 Agenda

Phyllis Wong <phyll74@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:44 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us

Hi All!

First, I want to thank you for taking reading/listening to these causes on behalf of the communities - in essence, the people of Hawaii – our kupuna, keiki, teachers, workers, etc. Regarding Covid-19, there is a lot to process, consider, and reconsider – again and again. I would definitely hate to be in any leadership role, as we speak because you're literally damned if you do and damned if you don't. No matter what, people will be hurt, disappointed, mad, etc. It's impossible to please everyone, but it is possible to keep people safer, if we can be supportive, cooperative, considerate, and respectful when safeguarding people, each other through careful decisions – opening businesses, eateries, churches, schools, wearing masks, travel, etc.

Second, since you will share this with others in Office and the community – I want to say that I'm glad Governor Ige and Judge Jill Otake backed the quarantine to protect us. That was a great move! Thank you!! We need to keep the momentum of good decisions going for our people.

Regarding businesses, eateries, church, schools, etc. reopening – suffice it to say, I really think that's a bad idea. When you think about 17 people infected with the virus at one and the same funeral, what happens in these aforementioned establishments with X amount of people? Some states have recorded a massive rise; for example, Arizona – more than 3,000 in one day! Can Hawaii's infrastructure handle it? I would hate to be in the position of deciding who gets to live and who takes their chances and weathers through it with, "So sorry and good luck." This heavily affects our elderly and those who don't have proper insurance, those who can't pay. These people are still someone's family.

I am writing this letter begging our decision-makers to think and reconsider reopening these entities. Our numbers are rising quite scarily. Don't wait for catastrophe to strike and you have to back peddle, singing your "could've, should've, would've". We have suffered and struggled (quite literally) with this sheltering-in-place and lockdown. Why go half-assed and stop now? Instead of us dying, why not reinforce the restriction and let this pandemic, itself, die? We open now and the numbers will rise beyond the State's control and beyond (medical and economic) its ability to help and be of service.

The cost, will be astronomically disastrous for the State as well as individuals/families: who will care for kids if both parents are infected with Covid-19 and they die; what if an only child is struck with it and dies; a family is wiped out – your family Governor Ige, Mayor Caldwell, Senators, Principals, etc.? These are not arbitrary or negative, grim questions, but a very possible reality. Don't be arrogant and think it can't happen to you; that these things happen to others. Covid-19 is not indiscriminate. It can happen to you just as it can happen to any of us.

Medically speaking, the cost is absurd! For example, my Aunty is 91 years old. Her daughter, my cousin, lives with her. Aunty's husband, who is older, was pulled out of Hale Nani Care Facility. It was recommended because the virus had spread, but didn't get to his floor/unit, so his family took him home. He had to be quarantined before he could go to another care home. Hale Nani recommended the help who could assist them with Uncle. He was home for three weeks. My Aunty and cousin had the caregivers for two weeks before they had to let them go. They paid

$15,000 for the two weeks and the help didn't even change Uncle's poop bag. They said they couldn't because they were not Registered Nurses. They also said the care was high because of Covid. Long-term Care only paid $80 per day. The rest of the money is an out of pocket expense. Who can afford $15,000 for two weeks (of half-assed help)?

If the schools open and student(s)/faculty are infected: can parents sue the teacher, the school, the State; do the teachers/staff have to use their vacation/sick leave if they and/or their children/parents get sick; if they have to quarantine, is it away from their family – where do they go, who pays; if all that leave is exhausted – how does it affect medical insurance and retirement; will all teachers and staff be given proper disinfectant(s)/sanitizers, masks?

I don't think people are blaming leadership right now, not yet. At this point in time, it's not about blaming. It is about thinking and rethinking the decisions you make. Lead and decide with integrity. Do not be influenced by businesses, tourism – greedy pay-offs. Please think about us – your constituents and our collective future.

I am so sorry for businesses and I don't mean any disrespect or discourtesy towards them or you (decision-makers). I know, understand, and am keenly aware of the burden(s) you currently face. We are united in financial worries, but with everything reopening – Covid-19 will spread rapidly. I am talking about lives, not just livelihood.

Can we get a state-wide consensus or petition going before schools open up again? The risk is too great!

Keep safe and healthy. Thank you for your consideration.

Blessings and God-winks,

Phyllis

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Starting School

menehune420 <menehune420@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:30 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha to who it may concern,

We have concerns! DOE can barely control uku's and you folks want to open up schools during this global pandemic!?? If our children contracts Covid-19 while attending school because you folks demand it. You will give us all no choice but to take legal actions and file lawsuits for your negligence. Remember you are all liable and will be held accountable for our children's SAFETY!

Aloha, God bless, and STAY SAFE!
P.S. Tell your governor to stop lying about stopping tourism!

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

please read

Deanna Kiersz <deanna.kiersz@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:32 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,
My name is Deanna Kiersz and I am a kindergarten teacher at Haiku Elementary School. I am 65 and at risk because of preexisting health conditions. I am very concerned about the safe reopening of our schools. There seems to be so many unanswered questions.
Being a kindergarten teacher, my first question is how in the world do you have 5 year olds maintain a 6 foot distance when in fact they don't know how much 6 feet is! Also, 5 year olds wearing masks? All day long I will be not teaching, I will be saying keep your distance, put on your mask, don't touch your mask, etc, etc!
Everyone talks about the children's social emotional health. Well, think about this, in a normal kindergarten classroom, children have a world of activities and lessons to explore. They have the freedom to work in small groups and sit with a friend and look at a book. Their first school experience is filled with wonder and fun!
Now they will sit in seats 6 feet apart and wear a mask. Their teacher, if it's me, will be filled with anxiety and fear. I really feel not much will be accomplished in this environment. I do not have the answers to any of this and it seems no one else does either.
All of these challenges are making many teachers frustrated and unheard. Through it all, Hawaii is going to lose many great and talented teachers because of the way this is all being handled.
I am supposed to report to work in 8 days and I am scared and in the dark. Plus, they want to cut my pay!
Please make good decisions right now.The time is now for great leadership. Please put human life first!
Deanna Kiersz

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Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening schools

Alapa'i Kaulia <alapaikaulia@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:45 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kākou,

I am writing as teacher and as a parent of an elementary child. We are not ready to reopen schools.

To hear all the misinformation that was said at the last meeting from the Superintendent Kishimoto really surprised me. As a teacher we were not given any training. My mother is a janitor and neither has she received any training. They are hoping to give us training in working online through online courses. I don't see that possible as the people that would need this training would be challenged at getting online to receive this help. I am currently the HSTA Head Representative for my school and we currently got a new principal. We have been forced to file a grievance because our administration is not following the MOU and this Is understandable after seeing Kishimoto's action. Our principal is scrambling and getting lots of negative feedback from the professionals in the classroom (teachers) to the point where our school is separated at this time. Please allow teachers to be the professionals they went to school to be. They will be the front line that will be overwhelmed with implemented rules that are not clear.

I also was recently made aware that the decision to reopen that Kishimoto is entertaining was created 3 years ago. This is an obsolete plan and schools opening should coincide with the currents States Reopening of Trans-Pacific travel. I believe this was an attempt to omit this important information and leaves one wondering what else information is being omitted to proceed.

Finally, as a parent, my child's school did not offer 100% distance leaning as an option. I will not be sending my child to school and I believe that 3 of 4 students in my child's school will not show up for face to face based off of some information collected by surveys done by our parents groups and other parents I know personally.

Please reconsider reopen of schools, this would help me be safe and prevent me from resigning due to the forced decisions of choosing my health and safety over my passion to teach; choosing to send my child to a possible infestation of COVID19 or to homeschool my child. There are so many decisions that need to be made and they all come with lasting effects. I will be sure to choose what will sustain me and my family in the long run and that is my health and safety.

As a parent, student, teacher, and Union Rep I emphasize "We are not ready to reopen schools".

Mahalo,
Alapa'i

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Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY: Starting school off on the right foot

Jeenna Canche <jeennacanche@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:28 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I have been a HIDOE public school teacher for fourteen years, and I am very familiar with the typical start to the school year. Even with the best intentions, the start to the year tends to be a whirlwind of reviewing protocol, attending meetings, setting up the classroom, and with whatever time might be left, collaborating with colleagues and planning for instruction. It is such a stressful time, that many teachers (myself included) come into their classrooms a week or so early to start this process in order to alleviate stress and to hopefully allow sufficient time for planning the most important part...the instruction.

This year is different for obvious reasons. Not only do we need to rethink and redo the physical layout of our classrooms, we also need to learn many NEW protocols, more than likely attend EVEN MORE meetings, AND we need to not just plan for instruction, but for most of us we also need to learn an entirely new way to deliver our instruction. This means learning not just ONE new piece of technology, but most likely SEVERAL such as: programs, apps, extensions, learning management systems, meeting platforms, etc. In addition to learning how to USE this technology, we also need to learn how to structure it for our students so that they will receive the best instruction we can offer in these unprecedented times.

Because of this, I feel that schools and teachers need more time to prepare for this incredible shift in instruction. If we want to start school off on the right foot, we need more time to prepare. Nine half days (or approximately 30 hours) is NOT enough time to prepare. Teachers should have been recalled at LEAST two weeks early to begin this journey, but it's too late for that.

Therefore, I am requesting that the board consider pushing the start date back by at least two weeks so that teachers and schools can have more time to prepare for this tremendous change in instruction. Let us learn and prepare properly so that our students can thrive. Let us set a good example to the nation of how to start out on the right foot instead of being the example of what NOT to do.

Mahalo,
Jeenna Canche
Spanish Teacher
Maui High School
808-280-4720

Gmail

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

Need for Differential pay

tanya park <parkt013@hotmail.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:50 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Tanya Park, I am a Special Education teacher at Kapunahala Elementary. This is my third year teaching in a self contained classroom.
I love my students and the sense of accomplishment I feel in helping them improve their lives on a daily basis, but it is hard work with insane work hours, many meetings and ridiculous amounts of paperwork that all must be done after students have left for the day.
I get to school at 6:30am, leave at 3:30pm and do a minimum of 2 hours of work everyday at home. I also work 3 out of 4 Saturdays to maintain my classroom and prep materials.
To take the pay away after finally getting a livable wage is a slap in the face after the 12+ hour days we all spent killing ourselves during distance learning. Now you ask us to go back in the classroom with less pay when we will not be able to keep ourselves safe. Our students spit, scratch, hit and kick us daily.
There is 0% chance we will be able to maintain social distancing and instead of hazard pay we get a pay cut, it is insulting.
The pay differential encouraged 3 Gen ed or dual certified teachers to switch to special education for the upcoming school year. If you take away the extra pay these teachers and many others will either go back to teaching gen end or quit outright. We already work with a shortage so our classroom are over crowded or we service multiple grades (I had K to 6th for 1.5 years). Taking the differential will make the situation much worse with a much larger shortage of SpEd Teachers.
Please reconsider. I know you will most likely be doing furloughs or pay cuts across the board at some point and to ask us to give up the extra 10,000 in addition is simply too much to accept.
I hope you understand that many teachers cannot make ends meet if their pay is cut and many will have no choice but to move on to other fields where they will be better compensated and valued.
Sincerely, Tanya Park

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Gmail

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

Differential Proposal

Lori Lolotai <lori.lolotai@k12.hi.us> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 10:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear members of the Board of Education,

First of all, thank you for all that you are all doing and considering how to help keep our children, teachers, and other DOE staff safe when opening the new school year.

I have been a special education teacher for 12 years now and when I first started back in 2008, I was part of the furloughs, 5% pay cut and so on and all during those years, we never had a step movement. Being the sole provider for my family as my husband is unable to work due to Parkinson's disease, it has been extremely difficult to support my family while living in Hawaii. We continue to rent a two bedroom apartment with my two grown children sharing a bedroom. Both my son and daughter want their own rooms, but we are unable financially to rent a larger place. We have been considering moving to Oregon for the past 3 years where the cost of living is much cheaper, there's no sales tax, and the housing is so much more affordable.

When we got the differential in January, we started to talk as a family that maybe we could continue to live here in Hawaii where we were all born and raised and where all of our families are. In addition to that, as a special education teacher comes many late long hours, lots of paperwork, daily risks of getting bitten, kicked, punched, and spat at from some of our students, and ongoing stress of the job that can be yet so rewarding. At the end of the day, though we love our students, we are tired, burnt out, exhausted, sometimes feeling defeated, and just done sometimes because of the stress and large demands of our jobs.

PLEASE reconsider rescinding the differentials as this will definitely cause many of us to move out of state because living in Hawaii is not affordable for many families. We all know that we are facing some rough times ahead financially as a State due to COVID-19, but there are other areas that the department can cut funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Lori Lolotai

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Gmail

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

Please KEEP shortage differentials

Holly Sullivan <holsullivan@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education,

Please KEEP shortage differentials for teachers! This has made a huge difference to me as a special education teacher. Although my pay is still considered low by mainland standards for similar high cost living areas, I was less stressed about being able to pay bills, pay student loans, and buy necessary materials for my students. I felt we did not lose as many special education teachers to retirement, burnout, and other careers that pay better and are less stressful. In fact, I believe many teachers began to choose to teach in shortage areas so that those of us who have continued to work in these areas have benefitted and not felt as underpaid and overworked. It helps make up for the many hours of work we put in at school, after school, and late at night doing our jobs in these areas so that our students can be served and thrive.

I know these are difficult times but they are also a time in which we need to support teachers and students so that students can thrive and succeed. Students‘ future lives and success are affected by the choices we make now.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the long term effects of your decisions.

Sincerely, Holly

Testimony for the BOE General Meeting on July 23rd- Action Item G

Reed Sasamura <sasamura.r@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Hawaii State Board of Education,

As a Special Education Teacher at Kaiser High School, I'd like to testify on Action Item G (Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year). I realize I have a bias in regard to the teacher shortage differential payments, but I hope this matter can be considered objectively. I have 4 reasons which support the continuation of these payments, or at the very least, support postponing this decision until more information relative to financing is available.

1) Congress is currently meeting this week and next to discuss the next "stimulus package" which MAY include funding of State and local governments. This funding (depending on its prescribed use) may provide the capital necessary to ensure our State retains necessary functions without departments experiencing extreme budget cuts or across the board furloughs or pay cuts. Thus it would be premature to decide on funding deferment such as this until Congress comes to an agreement.

2) These differential payments currently support teachers who work in positions that cater to some of our most academically, emotionally, and (sometimes) physically vulnerable children. The responsibilities for these positions are not "easy", as identified by the severe shortage of qualified applicants (even before the pandemic). Following implementation last school year however, early data indicates successful recruitment and retention of teachers in these difficult-to-fill positions. Without continued incentives to recruit or retain qualified teachers to these positions, we're sacrificing the well-being of our most vulnerable children. It's these children which need the extra support now more so than ever before.

3) These differential payments currently support approximately 4000 families across our State. In lieu of our high unemployment rates due to the pandemic, many families rely on the extra pay to feed themselves and pay bills. It doesn't help that PUA is scheduled to end this week, and that many secondary jobs for teachers are not currently available.

4) The greater looming threat to financial stability among State workers is the potential for pay cuts or furloughs. If deferring funding for this differential will GUARANTEE State workers will NOT experience pay cuts or furloughs, then it should be fine to do so as it's for the greater good. If such guarantee cannot be made however, then this differential will significantly soften the financial blow to these workers. We have the opportunity now to at least help 4000 families through this difficult time should pay cuts be deemed necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

- Reed Sasamura

Testimony

Kat <kathyabrew@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 1:25 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teacher in special education, hard-to-staff geographical location, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a preschool special education teacher at Pearl Ridge Elementary School. I have been teaching special education for over 19 years.

A little over 7 months ago the Board of Education announced their plans to support pay differentials. Dr. Kishimoto said, "The difficulties in recruiting qualified teachers...have created an equity issue for our most vulnerable students. We have listened to the feedback from our educators and it's time for bold action to unleash the promise and power of public education on behalf of our haumana."

With that announcement, while the money didn't hurt (nobody will say no to more money), the most important aspect was the message. The Board of Education and Dr. Kishimoto were finally acknowledging what those of us on the front lines have always known: our most vulnerable students need veteran, qualified teachers to help them overcome the challenges they face. Their challenges are greater than the vast majority of students in public education and because of that, those educating these students face greater challenges as well.

I have known many colleagues who have either moved to a general education position or left teaching altogether. I have struggled with whether or not to continue teaching special education. The pay differentials and more importantly the message it conveys has helped many educators decide to stay in positions or return to positions to service these vulnerable students. Despite my passion for educating students with special needs, if pay differentials are no longer funded, I can not say with certainty that I will remain in a special education position or with the Department of Education.

I understand the struggles our state is facing during these unprecedented times. I expect there will be pay cuts and/or furloughs. If so, in discontinuing pay differentials, educators in those positions could potentially face losing more than the majority of our colleagues. Then, the message the Board of Education will be sending is completely opposite of the original intent of pay differentials. The message then becomes that our most vulnerable students and those who educate them matter when it is convenient and easy. However, even in difficult times, the message should be the same. We need to continue to address and bridge the inequities they face, now more so than ever.

I respectfully request that you consider continuing to fund pay differentials. Thank you for your consideration.

Kathryn Miyamoto

Gmail

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

Opening our schools

Diane Favreau-Chung <favreaussc@mac.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 3:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the:
Board of Education and Superintendent Kashimoto,

I am writing to say that our educators are afraid to go back to teaching our children because of this deadly disease COVID-19. Out children are afraid. We as Grandparents, and Parents are not willing to send our children back to school when there is a Pandemic.
Our educators need to be given the lessons they need on how to teach our children 100% virtually until it is completely safe to return back to their schools. We need to have a teacher teaching the virtual classes not a video. The teacher should be there to help our children with the lessons that the will learn. This way the children will have a teacher to help them understand the lessons and keep the children on the right path in learning their lessons.

People are getting very sick and dying from the Coronavirus! It is extremely contagious. You can't expect children to go to school and not play around and socialize and keep a 6 foot distance all day.

Once schools open up people will get sick and spread the virus to their families and friends. It will spread like a wild fire out of control. Then what? No turning back after that. Too late, many people will die.

Delay opening up schools until there is no cases of people testing positive with the coronavirus for 30 days or longer what ever the CDC says would be a good indicator that it is safe for children to go back to school.

Do not open up the schools. It is not safe for anyone. You will be adding more stress and anxiety to many people who are already afraid of this Pandemic.

Thank you for reading these letters that are being sent to you.

Sincerely,

Diane Favreau-Chung
(Grandmother)

Gmail

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

Virtual only

Lynette Low <lynettel@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 4:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,
I'm a high school teacher with a compromised immune system. Either I retire now after 21 years of teaching since I have disability approved or we start School virtually. Which will cost more...sub teachers and disability payments or delaying school and going virtual only? Be Akamai and save lives.
Regrets,
Lynette
Teacher

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

I am opposed to the opening of Hawaii’s Public Schools in August.

Patricia Blair <patriciablair@msn.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 4:44 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

It’s just to soon. Teachers and children should not be guinea pigs in this coronavirus issue. Virtual learning Is the only safe mode at this time.
Patricia Blair, RN, Kailua
Sent from my iPad

Gmail

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

Testimony

Bronwyn Tatman <bronwyntatman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 5:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning. I'm writing as a secondary school teacher who is very worried about opening to students on August 4th. I am a 12-month teacher so I have been helping my administration plan for this reopening all summer. With the way that information and guidelines have rolled out from the doe and hsta in bits and pieces, we have not been able to properly plan for our large High School to open up safely. I think I speak for most schools when I say we need a few more weeks to get prepared. The DOE has barely provided any professional development for online teaching and have left our teachers and students to fend for themselves. We haven't received any devices or any templates to guide us in our communication with the public about opening school. It is baffling to me that Dr. Kishimoto thinks anyone is ready to open up August 4. Please consider pushing the open date back a few weeks. We just need more time to prepare. Thank you for your understanding.
Bronwyn Tatman

Gmail

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

Testimony

Bronwyn Tatman <bronwyntatman@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 5:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello. I write to you as a parent on Maui whose son attends Kalama Intermediate School. I am very concerned that the school is not prepared to open up safely on August 4th. I realize everyone is doing their best but given the circumstances and the way the HIDOE has rolled this out in such an unorganized manner, most schools are not ready. In fact, Kalama does not even have a principal. Please consider pushing back the start date a couple weeks so our schools can get prepared to open safely and our teachers have time to become knowledgeable in distance teaching for our children. Thanks. Bronwyn Tatman

Board of Education Meeting 722/20

lyon@hawaii.rr.com <lyon@hawaii.rr.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 5:58 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha and thank your allowing my testimony. My name is Elizabeth DeLyon and I am a school teacher of 31 years from the island of Maui, Haiku Elem 3rd grade teacher.

This situation is serious. We went on strike for far less. We need to stand strong and act smart, as many teachers will not return to teaching. And if we are forced to wait for these answers until the first day teachers report back, there will be some empty seats, mine being one.

Why do we have to wait until the first day of school to hear our roll out conditions on our day of return. We have **not been notified of any plans** from our school. Parents from our school have not been reached out to and provided any survey of their preference nor of the exact plan of our return! This lack of communication has forced them to find other conditions for this school year. Our numbers have diminished from this complete lack of communication. We had no Principal until yesterday. During a pandemic we were without leadership and we are paying for the consequences.

This virus is not to be messed with. We have lost friends. It's no joke. We need to treat this situation as if it were our child or grandchild at risk. If the DOE doesn't value our lives and the lives of our community, then we need to stand strong together.
I will retire. Many others will leave, too. Dr. Kishimoto thinks not, but she is wrong. Maybe that is a great place to start.

Please ask that a survey is generated this week asking teachers their plans and preferences to return if schools open the following week for teachers.
I think the response will be drastically different than the other as now the cases are out of control on the mainland.

*PLEASE ask that they provide accommodation that I can continue teaching safely from my home.**We set up an accountability system and allow teachers who are at risk with physical conditions or those who do not feel safe to return to campus be allowed to teach remotely from home. We are professionals!! Someone can confirm our attendance by logging into our Webex each day/session. We can roll out a common schedule and assure that teachers are teaching their full work load from home by having an accountability system**. Really easy!*

We work hard. We are not cutting corners and its really an insult to say that we cannot be accountable. It was the DOE who would not set a standard when the pandemic happened and allowed each principal to say, "Do your best." **That caused the discrepancy in workload.** The very thing we are asking that they not repeat. I personally have never worked so hard as I did Q4. As senior teacher, I was putting in 12-15 hour days as the GLC of a young grade level. But it was for the keiki. No regrets.

Dr. Kishimoto's testimony yesterday had some serious flaws!
She was asked the question about teachers not feeling safe- she did not address that. Instead she talked about-
Teachers *voluntary* training has been exceptional. **DOE has not given one minute of paid training since this pandemic has begun! Not one class during our paid hours of service on how to use. Web EX nor Google, nor how to pdf report cards to families even! Yes teachers are hard working and if it is not provided, we do on our own time, so many have figured out how to roll out online instruction using common templates on Google, this has not been given to us by DOE nor given us any compensation or given to us to do in lieu of other work.**

She said that we always start the year with training. Again false. We sit in meetings, watch safety videos, read the handbook, in my 8 years at Haiku School I can honestly attest that the 'online training' for teachers has been seriously deficient. Minimal at best.

The DOE is not doing a good job maintaining families nor students from their lack of follow through and communication with the people they serve.

PLEASE HELP US!

Thank you,
Liz DeLyon

Blessings of Peace and Grace

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

2 Peter 2

Gmail

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

The need for shortage differentials

Rick OnMaui <upcountrysubguy@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:32 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

21 July 2020

Aloha,

First, much mahalo to you for the opportunity to allow teachers to voice our thoughts and concerns, regarding the shortage differentials.

For the past five years, I have been a special education teacher, serving in the Community Based Instruction (CBI) class at King Kekaulike High School. This year I will be an inclusion science teacher at Kalama Intermediate School

The work I do along with the special education teachers requires an enormous amount of time and energy--implementing the curriculum, class management for the student population as well as the educational assistant team and behavioral and/or medical matters. No doubt I love and enjoy the work and the differential has created a great, positive impact on my well being, my family, my finances, my community, and my students.

In addition, the IEP alone is beastly work, quite involved with scheduling and holding meetings, coordinating with other team members for evaluations and consultations, implementing goals/objectives, collaborating and instructing educational assistants, gathering data, just to name a few. The burden of this important work for our students can easily be another job in itself.

Without question, these reasons along with your own were what brought the shortage differentials at the beginning of this year. You listened and understood the plight and requests of these educators. So please continue to support our teachers, our community, and especially our students.

Sincerely,

Rick Rulloda
Science Inclusion Teacher
Kalama Intermediate School
808.573.8735

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

Miss Parcels <kparcels@phes.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hello,
I am a special education teacher with a the Hawaii public school system. As a product of the Hawaii public school system, someone also receives services in special education as a student, I am asking you to keep your promise and continue to find the differentials of first and foremost; special education classroom teachers, second hawaiian language immersion schools, and educators it hard to staff schools.

It is very important that our state continues to encourage these teachers with pay incentive as our Keiki rely on licensed professionals in their communities.

These differentials allow me to continue to not work a second job, making my passion for teaching spread thin.

Thank you for maintaining this differential and possibly looking to extend it for years to come to encourage our communities to work in these difficult to staff fields.

Our child need to be put first when thinking about this decision.

Thank you,
Kellie Parcels
Special Education Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony - Differentials

Fawn Ali <ncfoze@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I have been a special education teacher for 21 years. If the differentials are discontinued I may have to move off the island for financial reasons. I have been employed by the DOE for 5 years and I have struggled financially the entire time. I took a pay-cut when I arrived in Hawaii, but I am determined to make it work here. **The differentials are desperately needed to support teachers and provide our keiki with qualified/certified teachers. Please do not discontinue the differentials.**

Mahalo,

Ms. Fawzia Ali
Special Ed Teacher

Gmail

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

Reopening schools

Alapa'i Kaulia <alapaikaulia@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:45 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha mai kākou,

I am writing as teacher and as a parent of an elementary child. We are not ready to reopen schools.

To hear all the misinformation that was said at the last meeting from the Superintendent Kishimoto really surprised me. As a teacher we were not given any training. My mother is a janitor and neither has she received any training. They are hoping to give us training in working online through online courses. I don't see that possible as the people that would need this training would be challenged at getting online to receive this help. I am currently the HSTA Head Representative for my school and we currently got a new principal. We have been forced to file a grievance because our administration is not following the MOU and this Is understandable after seeing Kishimoto's action. Our principal is scrambling and getting lots of negative feedback from the professionals in the classroom (teachers) to the point where our school is separated at this time. Please allow teachers to be the professionals they went to school to be. They will be the front line that will be overwhelmed with implemented rules that are not clear.

I also was recently made aware that the decision to reopen that Kishimoto is entertaining was created 3 years ago. This is an obsolete plan and schools opening should coincide with the currents States Reopening of Trans-Pacific travel. I believe this was an attempt to omit this important information and leaves one wondering what else information is being omitted to proceed.

Finally, as a parent, my child's school did not offer 100% distance leaning as an option. I will not be sending my child to school and I believe that 3 of 4 students in my child's school will not show up for face to face based off of some information collected by surveys done by our parents groups and other parents I know personally.

Please reconsider reopen of schools, this would help me be safe and prevent me from resigning due to the forced decisions of choosing my health and safety over my passion to teach; choosing to send my child to a possible infestation of COVID19 or to homeschool my child. There are so many decisions that need to be made and they all come with lasting effects. I will be sure to choose what will sustain me and my family in the long run and that is my health and safety.

As a parent, student, teacher, and Union Rep I emphasize "We are not ready to reopen schools".

Mahalo,
Alapa'i

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

Testimony about differential pay

Liz Noetzel <Liz.Noetzel@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I am a Seventh Grade English Language Arts teacher at Waikoloa Middle School School on the Big Island. I am writing to urge you to reject the proposal to discontinue the differential pay, if even 'temporarily,' despite the economic constraints facing our state. I have been a DOE teacher for nearly twenty-five years and have hung in there through tough economic times, turning down more lucrative positions at private schools here and on the mainland, simply because I believe in public education and the fundamental rights of our island's keiki to receive a quality education. I finally felt some relief when the differential pay went into effect, not only financially, but emotionally- like, whoa, I'm appreciated.

While I completely understand that times are rough for the State, they are equally as rough for those of us who receive this little bit of extra cash in our paycheck for our willingness to teach in the rural area that we do. Our price for a gallon of gas in Waimea, where I live, is $3.99. A box of cereal is upwards of $7.00. Living in hard-to-staff areas means these smaller towns on the Big Island have no competition on their goods and services, so they can charge what they please. The differentials help us afford to STAY in these areas. It is simple math- without the extra pay, not to mention the fear of teaching in this frightening time, I know of teachers (myself included) who may choose to leave the profession before school starts in less than two weeks. I am still undecided. If more is taken away and I am asked to do even more, as well as put my life on the line, I am not inclined to remain in this profession here.

This is not a threat, this is a simple fact of life when weighing the realities of our time. Every bit of a paycheck that is whittled away says to teachers, "Sorry, we don't value you," and that is a horrible message to be sending to us at this moment in history. It should not be the burden of teachers to fund the economy.

With appreciation for your support and understanding,
Liz Noetzel

****

Liz Noetzel
Waikoloa Middle School
Seventh Grade
English Language Arts Teacher

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

Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Amber Corrales <lokelani711@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 6:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Board of Education:

Aloha- I am a teacher at Kohala High School, Kapa‘au, HI 96755.

I am writing to request that you continue to fund the hard to fill, special education, and Hawaiian language immersion differentials. They have worked to keep educators in place in these schools and attract new teachers to these schools as well. The DOE is acting in a misguided way, to decrease these in the time when teachers are considering leaving the profession due to valid safety concerns. I know I am. I only have to teach for one quarter, and I have met the milestone to resign with full medical. The proposal from DOE which aims to defer millions of dollars in shortage differentials that the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) began in January for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools is short-sighted at best, using teachers kindness and love for children against us again, at worst. The workload difference between teaching at a fully staffed, large school is so great for us, there is no way to not continue the differential (which should be raised).

If this proposal is approved, nearly 4,000 educators will see a drop in pay, at a time when each of us is considering how attached we are to continuing in this profession.

On Dec. 5, Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii’s critical teacher shortage. The BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages. Has the shortage ended? No, in fact, many will leave due to starting too early and not being safe.

Also during the meeting, Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

This new proposal breaks that pledge. The HIDOE said the Legislature did not approve funding for the differentials as requested. It is now opting to suspend this compensation instead of looking at other areas of its operating budget, as originally promised.

This differential worked. The number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent.

Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations.

“The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas,” said Hawaii State Teachers Association President Corey Rosenlee. “Why would you cut a program that works? It defies logic.” There are so many layers of "fat" above the teacher level that could be cut. Please do not take away this vital differential. It will be devastating to our community. Many of our Kohala teachers are young, energetic, and employable ANYWHERE, IN ANY FIELD. There are only two "old timers" at our school. We do not have access to an educated population, seeking teaching licenses, and are already using far too many unlicensed teachers, all this in the pandemic. This opens us to lawsuits, for having unlicensed teachers and teachers seeking licenses not having the professional credential to do the job and now, maintain safety for kids.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Amber Corrales

Kohala High School

PO Box 480

Kapaau, HI 96755

Gmail

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

Testimony

Faith Tom <ftom1060@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Mrs Faith Tom and I am a Kindergarten Teacher who has taught @ Ma'ili Elementary School for 30 years.

Please reject this proposal. This differential is the reason I decided to keep teaching in my current position. If it is retracted I am considering retiring at any time. This will negatively impact myself as well as my students. As much as I love my students & teaching them, due to the current situation I would definitely consider retiring immediately. This will greatly affect my students because they will lose a very experienced teacher who has such passion and is nurturing to help them learn in a school setting.

Again, please I urge you to reject this proposal

Thank you,

Mrs Faith Tom
Ma'ili Elementary School
Kindergarten/GLC

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shea Harper <sheaharper@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:22 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I do not understand how it is possible that our Hawaii BOE has not be able to be forward thinking on many issues but most importantly on the issue of a school plan for a safe return for the year 2020-2021. We have known for months the possibility of needing a modified school schedule. I have seen a meeting, some brief flyers, and that is it from the BOE. Too many times over the years the Hawaii BOE has been slow to make positive and relative change happen. There always seems to be unresearched ideas put out on paper that are barely executed if at all. This case is no different. I feel as though no one other than the school staffs themselves have been trying to make a plan the best they can without any guidance.

The families and school children of Hawaii are being let down (again) and left in the dark. We are NOT feeling cared for due to the lack of our BOE serious real planning. It feels as though the those in power on the Hawaii BOE are waiting for someone else to get it done. Why? As each member of the BOE sit in your position you must remember 24/7 that YOU have the power be a creative, compassionate, forward thinking, and a leader of real action not just ideas of a person with a title sitting on a board.

Let’s make Hawaii schools safe and a great for our educational staff and keiki to learn and grow for real. Please stop just putting ideas down in paper or discussing thoughts without meaningful follow and action.

Thank you for your time.

Shea Harper

Gmail

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

Differential pay

Russ Josephson <russ_josephson@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:22 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Good morning.

My message is brief.

1) The differentials now up for discussion were agreed upon as a way to retain teachers. There is no logical reason to believe that the need has diminished at all.

2) We had an agreement on the differentials and we should honor it because it's the right thing to do. For one thing, people have made life decisions based on the agreement.

3) We all recognize that the pandemic has caused a lot of problems for Hawai'i. That said, to seek to balance a budget on the backs of teachers is unfair and unrealistic. Further, to have even mentioned pay cuts without a discussion with HSTA is disrepectful. I know some are going to try to sell the idea of eliminating the differential by linking it to possible pay cuts, but that's doubly unfair.

In summary, stick with the deal. Do the right thing. Teachers have enough stress dealing with the prospect of returning to school in some form at risk to their health and possibly to their lives. Don't add to that stress with proposals such as this.

Thank you for your consideration of my remarks.

Sincerely,

Russ Josephson, teacher
Kapa'a Middle School

Russ

“Don’t worry. Do something.” ©

Gmail

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

Testimony

David Bliss <blissd387@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To: The Hawaii Board of Education

This letter is written in response to the recent proposal to defer millions of dollars in shortage differentials that the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) began in January for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools.

The differentials have been the difference in keeping qualified teachers in Special Education. Without the differential pay, many of us, including myself, would have made the decision to move back to the Mainland (before the upcoming 2020 – 21 academic school year), where living on a teacher's salary is more manageable.

It seems like the State was working in bad faith by promising the differential and then revoking this much needed pay boost on a Friday at 5:00pm less than two weeks before teachers report for duty. Teachers have already committed to working in Special Education in Hawaii before this "bait and switch" tactic was employed. It is too late for many of us to break housing leases and seek employment on the Mainland.

The State should look elsewhere for funding to continue with this differential. Plausible cuts could be to eliminate the District Education Specialists departments with their exorbitant travel budgets and resource teacher staffing budgets. All trainings and special education and ELL updates could be done through webinars and emails initiated through a central office in Honolulu. These saved resources could be reallocated to fund the shortage differential pay.

Ending the differential pay will force more qualified special education teachers to leave and increase the Department of Education's liability again by failing to meet the needs of our disabled student population.

Sincerely,

David Bliss

Special Education

Kealakehe High

Gmail

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

H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees

Amber Corrales <lokelani711@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha-
My name is Amber Corrales and I am a teacher at Kohala High School.

I am writing to share my expectation that the BOE postpone restarting school until these items are addressed:

1) Allow teachers to vote on the HSTA/ DOE MOU regarding the start of school.

2) Provide a waiver of personal liability for each teacher, signed by each parent/ guardian that will be sending their child to school.

According to HSTA: "We have teacher protection in the contract to address liability and the employer shall provide legal counsel for teachers who are sued for actions taken by them in the course of their employment and within the scope of their duties and responsibilities." The onus to prove that COVID-19 effects happen at school is on the teachers. This is impossible due to HIPPA laws. Provide the waiver, signed by the families prior to the students stepping foot in our airflow restricted, impossible to sanitize classrooms.

3) Resurvey community members and teachers. The surveys were taken during a time when COVID cases were minimal and declining. That is not the case any longer. Please do this again. It is easy with Google Forms.

4) Stop treating salaried employees as hourly employees. We could easily start school later, while continuing paychecks. We just need to teach our 180 days and have our PC,etc. days sometime in the calendar year. This is not possible due to an antiquated payroll system that treats salaried employees as hourly. If you divide the salaries by months and continue paychecks, does it really matter which days of the calendar year are actually worked? The only people affected are brand new teachers to the DOE, who would experience a delay in pay, for not starting at the beginning. This requires an out-of-the box approach.

5) Do not start school until there are no new cases for four weeks, as originally agreed upon.

It is time to put safety first, ahead of the CARES Act funds.

Mahalo,
Amber Corrales
Kohala High School
Kapaau, HI 96755

Gmail

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

Testmony

Rose Stabenau Jenner <roseinmaui@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:28 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Rose Baagoe and I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

I am a teacher/ support at Lahaina Intermediate School for the past 15 years, I have seen the high turnover first hand and the impact that it has on school culture. climate, and programs.

I ask that you continue the compensation. We are already starting off the school year missing 8 teachers over 1/4th of our teaching staff.
We cannot afford to lose any more teachers, and in this pandemic, we are bound to lose more as more leave for higher pay, less cost of living on the mainland.

Sincerely,
Rose Baagoe
1010 Front St D107
Lahaina, HI 96761

Gmail

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

testimony

Angela Cain <cain.angela.r@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:50 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Angela Cain. I am a kindergarten special education teacher Kauai. I am testifying on action item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

On Dec. 5, Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and board members agreed action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. The BOE approved paying up to $10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages.

Also during the meeting, Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year. Citing that the Legislature did not fund the differentials, the HIDOE is now opting to suspend this compensation instead of looking at other areas of its operating budget, as originally promised.

Data collected shows that the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent. Certified Special Education teachers are critical to the education system and work with some of the state's most vulnerable students. The differentials are both needed and well deserved for the countless hours special education teachers spend writing IEPS, attending meetings, differentiating lesson plans and teaching within the classroom.

Not funding the differentials will only encourage more people to leave the field, retire early, or decide not to become a teacher at all. Our keiki will suffer most because there will be too few qualified teachers and increased class sizes to provide specially designed instruction.

Respectfully,

Angela Cain, Kauai

Gmail

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

Testimony

Naomi McCall <naomi.mccall@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Education:

I am a teacher at Maui High School and parent of twins who are rising freshmen at King Kekakulike High School this year. My husband is a teacher at Kula Elementary School.

We have not stopped working since the school shut-down in March. We have been attending virtual meetings, watching webinars, and trying to figure out how we will teach this coming school year with the specter of COVID-19 lurking.

We know our communities are suffering. This includes grandparents, parents, students and their extended families. At one of our meetings a teacher said, "When we look back on how we handled this, will we be able to say not one student died or one teacher died because we rushed to open schools?!" We know we can't stop the virus, but we can determine how we respond.

I've been doing Google Meet sessions with teachers who are struggling with the use of technology because they have not been using it in their face-to-face instruction. These are teachers who care deeply for their students and are in tears because they want to do a good job for their students but have no experience teaching in a virtual environment.

As parents, we wanted to see our kids play sports, join clubs, and enjoy their first homecoming. They miss seeing their friends and were looking forward to attending high school. In this current circumstance, we worry more about their health and safety and of the health and safety of those around them.

Because of the lack of guidance from the top, schools and teachers are figuring this out on our own. We need time. We are not asking for schools to not open, but a delay in the opening of schools by one or ideally two weeks would allow teachers to develop procedures and plans to operate in what is sure to be the new normal.

Thank you for your consideration.
Naomi McCall, NBCT
Co-Class Advisor C/O 2023

Gmail

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

Testimony

Erin Allan <erinallan@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May concern,

Recently I have heard that the Board of Education is contemplating taking away the shortage differentials implemented in early 2020. I would like the Board to reconsider and keep shortage differentials in place. As a special education teacher, I can attest to how these differentials have helped educators. The differential pay has helped me reach financial stability. I no longer worry about money as much and feel like I can see a future in which I live in Hawaii forever.

Thank you
Erin Allan
Special Education Teacher
Voyager PCS

Sent from my iPhone

Returning To School

Cheryl Kuroiwa <bcnalu@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:01 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Board of Education Members,

As a parent of children in the Hawaii school system I do not believe it is safe for my children to return to school. The Department of Education does not have a clear plan on how to swiftly contact trace students/teachers/faculty and staff at schools. It is NOT SAFE.

I emailed my sons school principal. He responded back by saying my children would be in 3 classes each day. Thus exposing them to at least 50 other students and who knows where they've been. There are no temperature checks at their school. The students are sanitizing the desks in between classes. Can you imagine what happens if one of those students comes down with COVID-19? What exactly gets shutdown? How fast will this occur? Does the Department of Education have enough teachers to fill sick teachers positions? The DOE in their news conference said that DOH will do the tracing. How long will that take? There has to be STATE WIDE DOE guidelines for each school to follow. Oh, they are throwing it back at DOH. By the time it comes back with action, the entire campus will be exposed.....my family.....then those of us working won't be able to work due to a 14 day quarantine. It becomes a massive snowball effect!

Some high schools are saying that if you choose Distance Learning Option (DLO) - you can't participate in any school activities: sports (much smaller "bubble" for some), clubs, etc. Um, the school is receiving funds for those children who choose DLO vs Home School. If those "bubbles" are smaller then why not?

What are the athletic guidelines if infection should occur there? Iolani Assistant Football coach a perfect example.

Another one which is bound to happen - Kamaaina Kare at St. Timothy's Church. A mother, who tested positive for covid-19 sends her 6 year child to school. Then child tests positive, now 40 plus children and families are affected. PARENTS will do this just to get their child out of the house.

The guidelines have to be STATE WIDE for ALL SCHOOLS: Masks and/or face shields at all times must be worn for the SAFETY of all: students and employees. Do you want a student to feel responsible for infecting their teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, administrators, coaches, etc....God help us they don't die...then that's a larger lifetime burden on the student? Kamehameha is requiring face shields and masks in order to be in FTF instruction. Punahou School installed filters on all their A/C systems to clean the air, they are also putting in sneeze guards and their are also requiring masks and/or face shields. MidPac & Iolani will have masks and/or face shields. I can't afford to send my children to private schools, but at least they have the HEALTH & SAFETY as NUMBER ONE on their list in mind.

Another state has a 4 phase return to school. PLANNING is first, however long that takes. Clearly, after watching the news conference yesterday the plans are NOT clear. Don't use our children as the guinea pigs. If you do, then we will truly have an enormous pandemic in our state.

Thank you.

Cheryl Kuroiwa
Parent of Children in the State of Hawaii

Gmail

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

Opening schools

johnny bravoo <jhnnybravoo@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:10 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Florida teachers are suing their departs of education for the timing of reopening their schools. Yes education is important and that's why we're all in this profession. Their are alternative routes like distant learning during this unsafe time. DOE members making the decision to open up schools are not on the front line like us teachers. Their in an AC office with very limited people they encounter daily. It seems like we're the guinea pigs here in this situation. When I became a teacher 16 years ago I took the job knowing that I'd be teaching in a safe and healthy environment just like we tell our parents. Your child is in a safe and healthy classroom environment that is conducive to learning. I can't believe or preach that at this time. I can't wake up in the morning like I did the past 16 years and be excited to go to work on the classroom. I'm scared! Please hold back the reopening of school and push back until it is safer. Show the teachers and the students how much their cared for because throwing us back into the classrooms in unprecedented times as were in right now is NOT showing that we cared for. Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Teacher Care/Test Kits/PD

Helen-Bailey Ledesma <guavagirl@me.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Catherine Payne/BOE,

Mahalo for your time and efforts on our behalf! I want to share some thoughts:

What are we doing to obtain Covid-19 test kits? We know asymptomatic carriers spread the virus widely. “Visual checks” of students is not enough to keep students, teachers, staff, family members and our community safe. Please consider the following:

Schools need trained/dedicated Health Clerks on campus full-time.

PPE must be available - without gaps.

Distance learning PD must be offered all year to support teacher development.

Teachers care for elderly parents, young kids and our school community. What are we doing to offer supports (e.g self-care, counseling, financial planning and exercise)?

Test kits/contact tracing/family education MUST be implemented ASAP. If we don’t test then we simply don’t know the danger. Additionally, teachers and staff are asked to go well beyond the extra mile. Please please protect their health!

My gratitude,
Mrs. Ledesma

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jennifer Megahan <j.megahan@seariders.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. I am a teacher at Waianae High School and am writing concerning the Differential that we began receiving this year. While I do understand that we are in a crisis in the state and the country, for that matter, the differential has made a huge difference. We had fewer teachers leave our school this year than we've had in the past 15 years that I've been teaching at Waianae High School. When teachers stay, it makes a huge impact on our students. They begin to believe that we are there to stay, we're there for them.
It is very difficult for students to build trust with their teachers when teachers leave the school in groves each year.
This year will be especially trying for all of us in education. As such, we will need to find new ways to engage students, especially those students who who need extra help, such as special education and those with behavioral issues. It is difficult to put in the extra energy needed for these students when you are also worrying about how you will pay the bills. The differential has allowed me personally to be able to focus on my students because I know I can make ends meet.

I believe the differential will help retain these teachers who dedicate themselves to their students.

Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Megahan

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY: Opening of Schools

Jo Mastin <jo.mastin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:43 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. My name is Jo Ann Mastin. I am a parent of two students at Palisades Elementary School. I am also a teacher at James Campbell High School.

A few days ago, I received my children's schedule for school. Thankfully, they will be on the same rotation and I am hoping my husband can get a flexible schedule to be home when they aren't in school. I will also recruit my mom, who has retired from working three jobs at a time, to hang out with her grandchildren to cover the days my husband and I can't provide adult supervision. Yes, it's a sacrifice many in Hawaii ask of their retired parents, but it pains me to ask because I believe she should be able to come and go as she pleases. She will not be asked to do the distance learning options with my kids.

Today, though, I just wanted you to think about being more creative with the way school is run. Somewhere along the history of our schools, someone said that we should have 180 days of instruction - some number that determined the magical formula for the amount of learning one can acquire to move to the next level of proficiency. You may know as lifelong learners yourselves, a lot of understanding and skills do happen in 180 days. However, it implies that the remaining days of the year, students stop learning. My school is on a block schedule which means we cut those 180 days in half and increase the amount of time we spend with students face-to-face to equate the same number of minutes they would get as others who are on a yearlong schedule.

This year, we will throw this construct out the window.

The amount of time the students spend with teachers will look different. So, I suppose, the question would be, how is our time spent with one another? Is it quality time? How are parents supporting learning at home? Teachers play an important role in helping students process their learning, plan their learning, guide their learning. I can't imagine my children never having the Mrs. Titus and Ms. Shons of the world who helped them love math and feel confident about themselves as readers and mathematicians. You know that adage that it takes a village to raise a child? Why can't we do that now? Why can't we, as a village, determine the best case scenarios for our children?

The best case scenario for our children is a delay. Of a month. Alongside the Governor's delay of travelers to our state. Just hunker down for another month with distance learning for all EXCEPT for those in dire need (such as those without access to technology). Let's pattern our schools like the medical clinics where doctors don't see patients unless it's absolutely necessary. I don't know what this will mean for me as an educator with two young children, but even allowing teachers to have flexible schedules to meet the needs of their families and their students need to be addressed. School and its minute counting can't happen. Trust teachers to move students forward. Develop Individualized Education Plans for all kids if need be.

Many educators have been working throughout the summer to prepare for this coming year with really no guidance except to prepare for it all. We have. Anyone who says otherwise do not know the same people I do.

On a side note, I thought about writing a will or a living trust last night (yes, I should do it anyway). I broke down and cried in the shower. I know I go to work and we have threats of shooters in our school community. I know I drive to work and some person could easily take me out while answering their text message. But, last night, I thought about what my husband would need to do if I somehow contracted COVID-19 and I were on a ventilator. The numbers say that I wouldn't die. I don't fall in that category. But never have I thought about going to work and being fearful of my students and what viruses they may carry, or myself passing on some virus to them and their families.

I will report to work next week: mask on - made by me; face shield on - bought with my own money. But, I hope you consider being creative and understand the resiliency of our students. Our students can (and do) learn every day. Teachers and parents can guide that learning together. Let our state get healthy again. Please don't use our schools as an experiment.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for thinking of the children whose lives you will affect by the decisions you make today.

Jo Ann Mastin

Testimony BOE

Autumn Ariola <autumn_ariola@waianaeelem.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:46 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Representatives,

I am writing to you concerning the temporary discontinuance of the shortage of differentials. I am a second-grade teacher at Waianae Elementary. I would like to give you some perspective on how cutting teacher pay will negatively impact teachers at our school and our community. For one, the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex side already has a history of the highest levels of teacher shortage and lowest levels of teacher recruitment and retention on the island. Cutting the hard to staff differentials will make schools that are difficult to staff even more difficult to staff. Secondly, schools in low socioeconomic communities across the island are known to have significant issues with student behaviors, poverty, and lack of funding. This year, schools are being forced to cut teachers resulting in larger class sizes. In my experience, 18-25 second grade students without full-time assistance and minimal educator assistant support is a challenge itself. It will be further challenging to manage large class sizes with COVID-19 and the lack of adequate resources. Teachers will be forced to pay for class sets of masks and cleaning supplies. Lastly, students that receive SPED services may be impacted by this decision as the differentials brought attention to hard to staff locations and more qualified teachers are now serving in these areas. There are numerous reasons and data supporting why cutting the differentials will negatively impact schools and student achievement. I do not support this decision. Teachers deserve to be compensated fairly, and I propose that there be an alternative solution rather than suspending the shortage differentials that do not harm educator and student livelihoods in hard to staff locations.

Mahalo,
Autumn Ariola

Aloha,

My name is Matthew Ruiz. I am a first-grade teacher at Kihei Elementary School on the island of Maui.

I am writing to say that I STRONGLY OPPOSE opening schools on August 4. The health, safety, and well being of our students, teachers, and community should be the TOP PRIORITY. Government officials, along with school leaders, continue to say that the safety and health are the top priority, but it does not seem that way.

I feel like the students and I are being used as test subjects. Telling us to return to school is like telling me, "you never know if you will die until it happens." Saying return to school is like saying, "it is ok if students get infected, but we won't know until it happens."

Sadly, this seems to be one way to "solve" the economic hardships that everyone is facing in Hawaii. If we do not open, then parents cannot go back to work. Believe the teachers when they say they understand everyone's situation, but it is sad and unfortunate that we are being used as a daycare.

We should NOT put the lives of students, let alone those who teach them in danger. The students and the teachers have families at home whom they do not wish to infect.

One of the biggest problems I see with this entire pandemic is that many people accidentally infect others because they are asymptomatic.

Why should we be forced back when we could experience many asymptomatic people?

Why are teachers NOT allowed to check the temperatures of the students? We were told that we are not medical professionals, and it is not in our job description, but aren't teachers told or forced to do a lot of other things that are not in our job description?

How are we supposed to monitor students' faces when they have a mask on?

How do you expect students to face forward for hours at a time?

How do you expect students to wear masks for hours at a time? Students in summer school are already playing with their masks, dropping it, and not wearing it properly.

How do you expect schools to have enough money for PPE when our schools do not even have enough money for basic classroom supplies?

How do you expect families to purchase PPE like hand sanitizer, hand soap, sanitation wipes when there's barely any, if not, NONE at all on the shelves?

How do you expect students to stay in their "ohana" bubble? Students need to use the restroom, drink water, walk from point A to point B, all while crossing paths with people NOT in their "ohana" bubble.

Schools SHOULD NOT open until teachers are given proper and adequate training on new procedures and protocols.

Schools SHOULD NOT open until every teacher, student, and parent knows what is expected for the first day and the rest of the school year.

Schools SHOULD NOT open until you folks can give us the proper guidance and make us feel safer than how we currently feel.

The majority of the teachers are NOT prepared to return to school. Frustrations are rising, anxiety is growing, and stress levels are high.

We DO NOT wish to return to school to put our lives or the students' lives at risk. It is always best to be safe than sorry.

I would not be able to live with myself if I came home one day and accidentally infected a family member because I unknowingly had the virus, and I am confident that students would feel the same guilt if they went home and infected their elderly family member who may or may not live in the same household because they unknowingly had the virus.

This school year will have everyone on edge, and I believe that teachers will spend a ton of time enforcing rules on wearing PPE to protect themselves and students more than they will spend teaching content itself.

Teacher burnout rates may end up being an all-time high this school year as I already see teachers being burnt out, and the school year has not even started yet.

I hope the questions brought up in this testimony are examined from every angle and addressed with the clearest and most detailed explanations.

Teachers are afraid, and so are many parents who fear to lose their kids due to the negligence of our school system.

Please, please, please, reconsider opening schools in August. This is a disaster waiting to happen. It is better to see nothing happen than seeing something tragic happening, knowing it could have been prevented.

WE ARE NOT TEST SUBJECTS!
OUR LIVES MATTER!

Mahalo,
Matthew Ruiz

Gmail

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

Testimony

Greta Martinez <greta.martinez@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Greta Martinez, My school is Kualapu'u Elementary Public Conversion Charter School.

I am **testifying on Action Item G:** Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I urge the board members to REJECT the proposal.

Many teachers are taking early retirement due to the pandemic. Eliminating the compensation of teachers will make more teachers leave the profession, leaving us even more in deficit of teachers than before the pandemic! This would be detrimental to education!

TESTIMONY: Starting school off on the right foot

Jeenna Canche <jeennacanche@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:02 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I have been a HIDOE public school teacher for fourteen years, and I am very familiar with the typical start to the school year. Even with the best intentions, the start to the year tends to be a whirlwind of reviewing protocol, attending meetings, setting up the classroom, and with whatever time might be left, collaborating with colleagues and planning for instruction. It is such a stressful time, that many teachers (myself included) come into their classrooms a week or so early to start this process in order to alleviate stress and to hopefully allow sufficient time for planning the most important part...the instruction.

This year is different for obvious reasons. Not only do we need to rethink and redo the physical layout of our classrooms, we also need to learn many NEW protocols, more than likely attend EVEN MORE meetings, AND we need to not just plan for instruction, but for most of us we also need to learn an entirely new way to deliver our instruction. This means learning not just ONE new piece of technology, but most likely SEVERAL such as: programs, apps, extensions, learning management systems, meeting platforms, etc. In addition to learning how to USE this technology, we also need to learn how to structure it for our students so that they will receive the best instruction we can offer in these unprecedented times.

Because of this, I feel that schools and teachers need more time to prepare for this incredible shift in instruction. If we want to start school off on the right foot, we need more time to prepare. Nine half days (or approximately 30 hours) is NOT enough time to prepare. Teachers should have been recalled at LEAST two weeks early to begin this journey, but it's too late for that.

Therefore, I am requesting that the board consider pushing the start date back by at least two weeks so that teachers and schools can have more time to prepare for this tremendous change in instruction. Let us learn and prepare properly so that our students can thrive. Let us set a good example to the nation of how to start out on the right foot instead of being the example of what NOT to do.

Mahalo,
Jeenna Canche
Spanish Teacher
Maui High School

808-280-4720

Gmail

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

VOTE: Reject proposal to drop pay

Gayle Fujita Ramsey <fujitaramsey@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing to ask you to reject the pay proposal to drop pay for Special Education Educators. I have yet to receive it since I only recently graduated from my Master's program and obtained certification in Special Education.

However, do not let this fool you. I am not your traditional educator. I decided to pursue a second career in education focusing on Special Education. With over 25 years in the private sector as an employee, manager, and business owner, with a focus on finance and human resources.

What you are proposing is only going to reduce morale amongst educators and send the message that those who choose to go into Special Education are not valued. While in my Master's program I worked full time as a resource teacher in the Social Studies Department. What this entailed was teaching ALL subjects: each period was a different subject and oftentimes each quarter a different subject. 9 subjects with one period of prep time that needed to be split between the inclusion class I went to 2 to 3 times a week and working my caseload. Remember now, I was also attending classes myself at UH towards a Masters Degree with two areas of certification. Did I mention IEP writing and meetings?

Special Education Educators take on so much for responsibility. The time involved is insane. Caseloads appear to be increasing with no reduction in other responsibilities. First year I had 9 cases. Second year I had 13. This year I will start off with 15. We are not only expected to teach our students, we are also expected to monitor and provide assistance to General Educators to help them provide services to our kiddos.

We have a shortage of Special Education Educators and providing a small bump in pay was a great idea. It sent the message that we recognize how much more we ask of you. We value what you provide our keiki, parents, and school.

As a business owner reducing someone's pay just at the first sign of financial difficulty would only lead to loss of employees because they will look elsewhere for work, morale dropping so customer service will go down, and most importantly sending a message that you are not valued. There is so much waste and misuse of funds in government it is crazy. If a private sector company ran themselves like our government we would have been bankrupt long ago. Why not look at ways to save money? Why not look at how to streamline work using the technology we have? Why not make sure we are utilizing what we have and eliminating waste across the board before cutting pay for anyone?

The answer is because it is easier to cut pay. Don't take the easy way out. Figure out how to work smarter. Figure out where the waste is and stop it.

Do not vote to drop pay. If you do, the consequences will be dire. This is not a threat, it is reality. For the first time, Special Education Educators felt valued. Those that left the SPED department decided to move back into it because they felt valued again.

I have three years to work in Special Education to ensure that I fulfill my obligation to my financial aid I received. Will I stay on after the obligation is fulfilled? I don't know. It will all come down to is it worth doing? Do I feel valued?

Please vote NO.

Gayle T. Fujita Ramsey

808.439.7442
MEdT, Secondary/SPED

Kailua High School Resouce Setting

Testimony. prior to 23rd July Board meeting

Shane Sigetic <sbjsigetic@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:04 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha to the Board of Education and parties associated with governance as well umbrella decisions for and with education.

Hi, my name is Shane, I'm and educator on the Big Island of Hawaii. I have provided to the communities here for several years. My experience and expertise in education encompasses teaching in various countries a variety of age/grade and ability levels as well having accumulated a plethora of documentation verifying my ability in providing for our keiki. I have degrees and licensure which are specific to the community of Hawaii and its needs; additionally I have embarked upon numerous educational enhancements and learning opportunities for myself to become a better provider in the field of education.
Many of us across the state of Hawaii continue to serve our communities and keiki with the uncertainty of personal and community wellness/health with these new times. We understand that there is a global and local impact. The most obvious that is of mention in many agendas and meetings is the financial impact. While its hard to remain blissful and desire education to be provided at the highest levels and easiest of access to our communities and keiki, we do understand that without financial support, many services and supports will suffer.
The boards proposition under section VI part G :Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical location and Hawaiian language immersion programs for 2020-2021 school year, to remove funding from select locations, the extra compensation, will send a message through the community of educators, students and 'ohana, that these very in need areas which are still yet to be filled, are of less importance than any other area of education. It is obvious that the trials and truth in these 'hard to staff' locations is so much so that even yet still the DOE is unable to fill all rolls. The additional incentive has helped procure qualified educators to meet the needs of our community, yet we are all still trying to fill these hard to staff positions by advocating their importance, offering incentives etc.
What I interpret from an outcome of your proposed discussion is that "We the board need money due to shortages due to covid-19, we are looking for areas to trim and tighten up or secure funds, we are alright to take it from specific people/locations opposed to across the board every single member from the board down, and that these hard to staff location, special education, Hawaiian immersion individuals will just have to make do and suck it up. They can cover and help support the loss of funds"
I truly hope you reconsider any forward progression of discontinuance towards any specific group and rather look to secure/save funds as an entire entity. I would suggest that if you furlough every single individual from the top BOE down to the simplest of assistance at a school. If you can honestly furlough every single person from the board down to the school staff and in between, you would be able to save monies. When you look at targeting specific groups and segregating us, you then have 'us vs them' due to your own choice of segregation. Why not just save funds by having everyone stay at home one extra day, acknowledge that "production" in all forms will only be at 80% with the extra day furloughed and be happy knowing that 80% is great because at least you can fund the 80%. If you have only enough fuel to drive 10 miles to get to the beach, yet if you can kick one of your children out of the car, maybe two if your lucky, you will have enough fuel to go to the nicer beach that is 15 miles away, albeit without two of your children. Or, just be happy that you can all stay together (Board,DOE,Educators, support staff etc.) and we'll all be at the beach. Its better to be together than apart. Please don't target the hard to staff locations, special education and Hawaiian immersion to scratch up funds to support your 100%school year. Or request assistance from the higher ups, national gov. We know that money is printed paper and made up numbers on a computer. They surely can press print or add a zero in an account; after finagling and hoops of course.

Much love and aloha

Shane

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Testimony

kgaitley@live.com <kgaitley@live.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:04 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kai Gaitley. I am currently employed as an Emergency Hire at Pahoa H.I.S as teacher for an off-campus program, and I am writing in regard to the following issue:
Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a prime example of the type of candidate the differentials were designed to attract. Because I don't have any previous experience in Special Education, I have always dismissed it as a career option without a second thought. Following graduation, when I was considering what teaching programs were available me, I never once considered the SpEd programs. Those were scary, complicated, potentially traumatic career options that were best suited to people familiar with the difficulties associated with the variously challenged students involved. These students are a significant proportion of every school population, yet for many people, both within and outside the education sector, the phrase 'Special Education' invokes a fear and discomfort that is as unfounded as it is commonplace.

But the lure of $10,000 can certainly make an open-minded / fiscally prudent person stop and reevaluate their options.

Instead of diving straight into a Master's, I instead chose to spend a year as a Substitute, to see if the K-12 teaching experience was as fruitful as my time at college. It of course included many challenges, but overall, the experience was far more enjoyable than I would ever have imagined. As an English and Anthropology student, I expected to cover the social sciences, but needs must and I also accepted some 'Inclusion' class assignments. I thoroughly enjoyed the more personal, focused nature of those assignments, and was gratified to see the warmth some of the students showed when I saw them around campus on other occasions.

I was, however, still focused on progressing as an English teacher. Even though last year I applied for the dual certificate Master's program at UH Manoa, my motivation was the stipend for tuition fees. I viewed the potential of teaching SpEd as a necessary burden, one that had to be accommodated in order to get the stipend, but an eventuality that should be avoided if at all possible.

Then I heard about the compensation program, which compelled me to reflect on my recent inclusion experiences and to speak with some of the SpEd teachers I was working alongside. When the master's program was abandoned for the upcoming school year, leaving the Post-Bacc certificate as my only viable option, I was left with a simple choice.

Prior to the announcement of the differentials, I would have either waited a year, or considered non-teaching programs. Instead, the promise of extra money allowed me to overcome my misconceptions and ask myself a question: Do I have the personal qualities required to provide these students with the level of service required? After an honest assessment of myself, I determined that yes, I do.

There may be a small number of people who choose to pursue a career in SpEd simply because of the promise of money. Those people will not be around for long. Rather, I expect that most new applicants will have had a similar thought process to my own, in that the proposed compensation demanded they also answer the question: can you do this job justice? If the answer is yes, apply.

If the board decides against this funding, they will be reneging on a deal guaranteed by the Superintendent on 12/05/19. Far, far worse than that, they will prevent all those extra potential recruits from asking themselves that same question, and deciding yes, they can also do that demanding, difficult but crucial job. We are all aware of the financial implications of the current crisis and budgets have to be trimmed. But trimming it from the budget of a wildly successful innovation aimed at improving the welfare of the most vulnerable section of our student population is cynical, cruel and extremely shortsighted. Of all the areas to cut, doing so here is unwise because it will embed the very inefficiencies this program was designed to eliminate. A well-staffed SpEd teaching pool frees up resources for the rest of the school, enabling the extra flexibility required to manage the inevitable budget shortfalls we will face.

At a time when the future configuration of education is unclear, draining the talent pool of those trained to assist the students least equipped to cope with disruption of any kind, is an abdication of the Department's responsibilities to its most vulnerable dependents.

Thank you for your time,

Kai A Gaitley.
808 430 6783

Virus-free. www.avg.com

Gmail

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

Testimony - General Business Meeting

Carla <carla.cabanillaku@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: agenda item VI-D

My name is Carla Cabanilla-Ku and I am a parent, daughter, and aunt. I am very concerned for the rush of opening schools when we have seen an increase of COVID numbers rise and being community spread. The state is putting not only the thousands of keiki but teachers and staff all at risk. Not to mention the families they all go home to, who may be at higher risk due to other medical conditions or age.

Back when this pandemic started and schools were shut down, the rule was instated that there must be zero cases in a 4 week period before school could resume. That never happened. And here we are 4 months later and we still have had 4 weeks of zero cases. Why are we rushing to re-open schools?

I OPPOSE the opening of schools and our government leaders and law makers must find alternative ways to assure the safety of our people.

Gmail

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

Sped and hard to staff differentials

Reinaldo Corpuz <reicorpuz@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony in regards to item G.

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing today about the special education differential.
I am a special education teacher at Kalakaua Middle School. I have been teaching for 27 years. Three years as a regular education teacher, and 24 years as a special education teacher. I find the timing of the proposal to eliminate the differential appaling. Many teachers have made the crossover from general education to special education based on this proposal. Many have also moved to a hard to staff school based on the proposed differential. By deferring the differentials now, seems almost like changing the rules of the game at halftime. What message does it send to these teachers who read a written document approved by the DOE and the BOE and decided to move to special education or a hard to staff school.

I humbly ask you to follow through with your promised sped differential for this year and the following years to maintain and attract qualified and
dedicated teachers for the benefit and meet the needs of our children with disabilities.

Mahalo,
Reinaldo Corpuz, Sped Teacher, Kalakaua Middle School

Gmail

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

Schools are not ready

Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
I am a science teacher and mother. I am also high risk for COVID-19. I have two options; go to school and risk my and my family's health or take a leave of absence without pay. That sucks! Why can I not request telework as an accommodation? It was available last school year but not this one?
Schools in Hawaii are not ready to reopen, the risk to students and faculty and in turn the whole of the school community is too risky. Please push the date back for in person education until we have all of the contact tracers, testing and other back up procedures and training in place so that our communities are not risking their lives to learn. Why are we rushing in to this, what happens in a month when school is open and tourism opens and there is still a surge on the mainland? How many times will a school get closed and reopened before distance learning returns? What happens if a school gets shut down more than once or twice? What is the procedure if a staff member dies due to transmission from a student? What is the procedure if a student dies due to transmission from a staff member or another student? Is there mental health assistance for staff and students who feel scared, stressed, depressed from this situation? Help we are lost, slow this train down before we crash!
Mahalo
Rachel Silverman

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

7/23 testimony - Please delay School Reopenings

Marie Coudrier <marieheff808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:24 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing today to respectfully request that schools be delayed in opening by at least one month. Principals, Directors, Teachers, staff, and quite frankly the BOE and DOE, need more time to prepare to bring our children back to school safely. With just under two weeks, 10 working days, our school leaders and teachers do not have enough time to safely put procedures and outdoor teaching areas into place. Our principals need more time to creatively create safe, small cohorts or "bubbles" for our kids, our custodians need to be in good practice for cleaning regiments.

We also need time to bring the number of covid cases down. It was stated back in March 2020, that schools would reopen when we had zero cases for 4 weeks. Why are our children being used as guinea pigs? Why are our valuable teachers being put at risk? Why is the state willing to risk our entire communities and islands?

As a substitute teacher, I am appalled that the superintendent stated that subs are being trained as to how to support teachers and schools during covid. I immediately put a call into TSEAS and to the director of my preferred school, and neither had heard of any such thing!

Please consider pushing back the opening of schools until September. If this is not an option, then please consider mandating DL until return after winter break. We all deserve to be safe. Kids will not regress! They are always learning in life and they will catch up in no time.

Mahalo for taking the time to consider this request.
Marie Heff Coudrier
Windward District Substitute Teacher and parent
808-781-3122

Testimony

Linda Jones <lindaloo808@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:32 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. I am currently teaching in a hard to staff position on the island of Lāna'i. I have been teaching here for the past eight years. Before that I taught in Honolulu private and public schools. I have been a resident of Hawaii for 50 years and a teacher for 20 of those years.
In 2009 I suffered through furloughs. I was frozen at step 6 with 12 years of service. I went to step 11 because of contract negotiations in my 18th year of teaching. I am supposed to be at step 14a. Last year there were discussions to compress the steps and that would put me where I should be because of uninterrupted service. When the furloughs were placed upon teachers to save the economy in '09 it was also deemed "temporary"!! It took ELEVEN YEARS to come back to erasing the "temporary" decrease in pay. This will not be "temporary"... that is a red herring. I cannot do this and wait another 11 years for the "temporary" pay cut. You cutting the pay that was already cut!!!!! I will not be able to survive this... especially where I teach!!!

Now you ask me... us... to be furloughed again and take away the one item I received... compensation for teaching in a school on an island where no one wants to teach! On Lāna'i the prices are twice the amount in Honolulu! Our gas is almost FIVE DOLLARS A GALLON! There is only one gas station... so there are no choices! To obtain critical medical care we must fly to Honolulu. To go to a box store we must go to Honolulu or Maui. We cannot drive there... as all others may do on every other island... save for Molokai.
By denying the compensation already agreed upon in negations of contract you are dooming Lāna'i High and Elementary School to not having qualified teachers for the students. As it stands now, the majority of teachers at our school are NOT teacher trained or licensed. Most are emergency hires with little to absolutely no experience in a classroom. The situation is so dire the administration is looking for past high school graduates with a class or two of college.
Now it is proposed to take away the compensation for living here, THE most expensive city in the state to live in !!! This is the worst move that could be made. And it is the students, the very ones who desperately need qualified teachers, who will bear the brunt of this ridiculous proposal. Save the economy on the backs of students with the least to begin with!!
I've not even discussed the fact that even if we could get professional teachers here... there is no housing for them !! If this proposal is approved there will be even LESS incentive for qualified teachers in the classrooms which are the ones which desperately need qualified teachers!!
I do not make as much money as I did prior to 2009. I've taken that hit for 11 years!! I cannot and will not take any more pay cuts, furloughs... none of it!! I've already done my part to save the economy!! Find another way!! Teachers are being sent into unsafe classrooms during the pandemic to save the economy yet again!! There are other means and ways to help the economy. The politicians, however, want to use federal monies... to the tunes of millions for other things...for other things...(or pocket it!!!) . I cannot fathom what could be more important than ensuring qualified, trained teachers are in every classroom. This really does not seem to be the case here.

Stop using teachers, who are no where near paid what they are worth (especially since it is grossly obvious the economy cannot survive without our services... babysitting!!!)!

I can retire. I can't live in my hometown of Hawaii because teachers have been strangled financially by the powers that be for decades.

I am a locally educated, homegrown teacher. If this is approved I will leave the profession. And here? On Lāna'i!? A kid just graduated from high school with a class or two of college will be "teaching"... (read babysitting) our keiki.

Please support the teachers who work where no one else wants to... or there won't be anyone willing to work in hard to staff positions.

Linda Jones
ELA/Speech/ Film/ Peer Mediation Educator

Gmail

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

School Reopening Concerns

Joseph Cassler <joseph.cassler@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:34 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Sen. Kouchi,

My name is Joe Cassler and I am a 10-year veteran teacher from Lihue. I currently teach at Kauai High School. I am writing to voice my sincerest concerns about the reopening of school for students on August 4, 2020. I am sending this testimony for Agenda Item VI.H re: Board Action on MOU. My concerns are focused on two areas: safety and teacher preparedness.

Teachers would do anything to keep their students safe and this is no different this year. With our keiki being one of the first groups to shelter in place and stay at home, there is little data to determine how this virus will affect our young population. The MOU between HSTA/DOE was originally very unclear in the guidelines set for safety. Teachers had to petition to ask for 6ft mandatory social distancing in our classrooms and masks, a safety measure proven to help stop the spread of C-19, are optional. This is very concerning to me because every other private sector business is requiring both. I wonder what makes students/teachers less vulnerable to not require the use of masks. Beyond this, Dr. Anderson and Dr. Park have both claimed that "Ohana Bubbles" will allow for contact tracing to occur at schools should a student/faculty member contract C-19. Kauai High School is the largest public school on Kauai and "Ohana Bubbles" are not realistic. This means beyond the 170 students I teach each week, I will be exposed to any number of additional students through the students I teach. The MOU also states that the DOH will provide clear written guidelines for the reopening of schools and I have yet to hear or see those guidelines written, only what we hear on the press conferences with Dr. Anderson and Dr. Park. We are 2 weeks away from students being on campus and yet safety protocols are not clear. What good is reopening the schools and economy if there is even the risk of needing to shut it down again? What good is reopening the school if there is any chance of ONE student or faculty member dying from COVID-19? Even one death related to the school spread of COVID-19 is too many.

Simply put, teachers are not ready to teach in a hybrid or distance learning model yet. Condensing curriculum, realigning standards/benchmarks, moving our classroom set up to meet safety standards, and training in online technology tools are all things that still need to be completed prior to opening school. Dr. Kishimoto's claim in her senate testimony that teachers have trained in the tools necessary to carry out distance learning is only a half truth. Many schools had to secure and provide their own professional development on distance learning. Dr. Kishimoto said it herself that only 7000 out of 13,000 teachers had training which leaves half of our teachers still to train in the 4 days prior to school beginning. Many unanswered questions still need to be addressed as curriculum is developed. For example, how do I structure activities for both online and face-to-face learning while considering that our high schoolers may need to watch younger siblings during their off-days?

I understand the Gov. Ige's need to get students back to school and parents back to work in the economic sense. However, the justification that schools should open simply to reopen the economy is politicizing the safety of 180,000 children and 13,000 teachers.

--
Mahalo,

Joe Cassler
Kauai High School
Freshman Academy Lead (Team Red)
808.274.3160

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Gmail

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

Funding Teacher Shortage Differentials

Heather Fomenko <heatherfomenko@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am writing in strong support to NOT defund the teacher shortage differentials. Many teachers have crossed over to fill those shortages during the last teacher transfer period. To defund them after they made the move would be detrimental to them wanting to stay. Not only is it difficult to attract teachers to the special education classrooms due to the heavy workload with preparing and implementing specialized instruction, we also need to develop a strong and positive relationship with the families. This is in addition to teaching full-time. Most times, we are taking work home with us to make sure that everything is ready for our students the next day or that everything is in place for the meeting that could take hours to complete for our students. The differential has been so helpful with justifying the extra time we do put in to get all of the required mandates done for IDEA. This work takes so much time we end up feeling spread too thin with all of the duties that need to be seen through on a day to day basis.

I know many teachers that took a huge sigh of relief when they discovered they would be compensated for that extra time and energy they put in with their IDEA students. Now the ones who have made the move to fill those underserved positions, will most likely want to make another switch because the incentive will have vanished. Many teachers depend on these differentials and cutting them now will certainly have a negative effect on attracting and keeping qualified teachers in these positions.

Please, please, please, do not discontinue this bit of hope that so many teachers have come to rely on.

Sincerely,

Heather Fomenko
Waiakea High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kim Kaopuiki <kimkaopuiki@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Please train DOE personnel on how to work in Public schools in Covid Times before we bring children and youth back to school. Its dangerous for all being in the unknown. We need answers for all "What happens if..." What is the plan if someone is sick? What if the plan if someone in the school has CoViD? What happens to the children who is supposed to be online learning on their off campus days, but do not have the support: wifi, computer, adult supervision?

Sent from my iPhone

Parent Testimony in Opposition of Current Reopening Plan - Mililani High School

Cassie Favreau-Chung <cassiefavreau@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:43 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To the Board of Education & Superintendent Kishimoto,

My son has been part of the Hawaii public school system his entire life, and proudly so — until today. Even having grown up with school shooting drills as the norm, this is the first time he has ever felt unsafe to be in the classroom. The way schools are haphazardly being reopened are unacceptable and quite frankly, negligent. The repercussions from this will not only affect our entire state (as school clusters emerge and spread), but will also negatively affect the learning of children who are already behind due to the way fourth quarter of last school year was handled. Neither my son nor my nephew received any direct contact from their 8th grade teachers at Mililani Middle School during the lockdown.

Now my son is about to start his freshman year at Mililani High School, and we have opted for the 100% virtual option (which I was later told is via Acellus). It is my understanding that there will be no live teacher for this program and it will be a robo-program, completely self-directed. This seems counter-intuitive. Especially with so many educators falling within the “high risk” category for COVID-19. If this is how schools are going to deal with their virtual option, we may decide to homeschool instead. I know of many other families considering homeschool, as well as teacher friends considering leaving the profession due to the unsafe conditions.

What seems to make the most sense, for the safety of educators and students alike, is to begin with all schools operating at 100% distance learning WITH TEACHERS educating students, and the goal to *eventually* move on-campus when there are no cases for at least 30 days (which is what we thought the original plan was). Take the time to properly train educators for distance learning and set EVERYONE up for success. I agree that we need to get students “back to school”, but we need to do it right.

So many households in Hawaii are multi-generational, with many having to decide to gamble not only the health of their child and themselves, but also the health of our kupuna. It’s a choice no one should have to make.

Please don’t make us throw away all these months of being cautious and social distancing just to take several steps back and be even worse off than we were before. Allow a different way of learning and teaching during these unprecedented times. We all want to get back to normal, but now is not the time.

Thank you for your time and for listening.

Sincerely,

Cassie Favreau-Chung

--

Cassie Favreau-Chung
Film/TV Creative
(808) 497-6412

...Sent from my iPhone, please embrace the typos.

Testimony

Alyssa Griffin <alyssakmgriffin@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Alyssa Griffin / 1st Grade Teacher
General Business Meeting
School Reopening
Oppose

Aloha,
I teach first grade at a school in Ewa Beach. I have a daughter starting Kindergarten this year. I currently live in Ewa Beach and was born and raised here as well. Since the school closures I have been juggling many things some of which include my daughters schooling (as preschool shut down as well), my 2 years olds care (daycare was shut down),my own responsibilities as a teacher, as well as my own mental and physical health.

With the approach of schools reopening I am terrified. Our school has adopted a hybrid plan where students will both be in the classroom learning as well as distance learning. Planning for BOTH types of teaching has not been an easy task. Add in the fear that sets in every single day that I may get exposed to Covid and bring it home to my family and I've basically had an anxiety/panic attack every night whilst trying to get to sleep. I am also a chronic asthmatic which deems me high-risk to the current disease, Covid-19. I am only 28 years old and in my 7th year of teaching. Retiring is not an option and seeing that I am an equal "bread-winner" in our family, quitting is not possible either. I have no choice but to jump into the burning building that will be our schools come August 4th.

During the meeting on July 16th with Dr.Kishimoto and the covid response team, Dr.Park couldn't even remember how class rotation works because she literally hasn't been in a school in such a long time yet she feels comfortable telling us how we should go about business in a school. I can't wrap my head around how that makes sense and how uncomfortable that makes me feel.

Please don't let schools open on August 4th. Not only are we putting everyone's physical health at risk but the mental and emotional damage it will do to our students is unparalleled. They will not be returning to the classroom they knew and loved. They will be constantly reminded to not move, not get too close to their friends, raise their hand if they need to grab a tissue, etc. etc. This is not the "normalcy" everyone is hoping for upon the opening of schools. Teachers will also be so busy comforting students after having been off from school for so long that we won't be able to focus on academics/much of our time will be spent on mental and emotional health. And with that, how am I supposed to comfort my first grader from 6 feet away?

In regards to my daughter who is starting kindergarten. She has always had a love for school. Starting her education in a setting with little to no "freedom" is not what I want for her. I want her to enjoy school and love it. I want her to be in a classroom where she can be herself and show the affection she has had since she was a baby not be confined to her desk for 6 hours a day.

I suggest we push back reopening face-to-face classes and begin a plan for distance learning and how to reach children who do not have the means for distance learning. This way teachers can be better prepared, no students will be left behind despite their inability to afford technology or even families that can support them, and when our keiki do return to school there will be less guidelines and it will be more like the great place they know and love.

Thank you for your time.

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY REGARDING SCHOOL REOPENING

Sarah Shewmaker <sarahshew79@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Sarah Shewmaker. I am a parent of a public school student at Makawao Elementary. My son will be entering first grade. I am deeply concerned about the seemingly callous opening of schools. I feel that schools are woefully underprepared for an opening during a pandemic at this time. I would prefer a distance learning program that is taught by an actual teacher. I am concerned for the health and well being of my child, his teachers, his friends, and every person that works at his school. Please consider starting school virtually, giving schools time to prepare for an actual reopening and phasing students back to face to face learning as we watch COVID numbers in our state.

Thank you,

Sarah Shewmaker

Gmail

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

Testimony

Lester Rivera <riveralg@hawaii.edu> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I'm testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I'm humbly and respectfully requesting that the extra compensation for classroom teachers **not be** temporarily discontinued or interrupted. Every year the classroom only gets between $250 to $500 for student and classroom supplies. I currently work in an economically disadvantaged school, the school does not have current textbooks for all subjects, and other materials, and only allocated $250 for classroom teachers, which only covers office supplies. To provide resources and materials to compensate for lack of textbooks and materials, last year and this year, for each year, I spent over $3,000 to provide students with engaging resources and materials. I'm sure that there are many other teachers that are feeling they have to spend their hard earned money to compensate for what the government is not willing to provide, for example to help ensure classrooms are provided with more than just a person and furniture.

If the extra compensation is discontinued, students will only have furniture in the classroom, and less teachers, because some teachers will leave the profession because they will feel they can not provide their students with the resources they need to help them learn. Remember, a teacher doesn't only use their voice to teach, teachers create an environment and provide resources the help students learn, unfortunately that environment and resources are not provided by the government.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and efforts.

Lester Rivera
Elementary School Teacher
Keonepoko Elementary School

Gmail

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

August 4, 2020 Opening of School Year

RusSkillz <russell.ibera@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

I was listening on Facebook Live yesterday to what our leaders had to say about the August 4 set date for students to return to school. Overall, this is what I gathered from what our leaders are thinking to themselves:

"I don't care what all of you have to say or what data is showing, all teachers will report back to work on August 4th."

Really? What kind of leaders will send teachers into an unsafe work environment? Is the DOE and BOE ready to receive a lawsuit just like the Governor in Florida in regards to their reopening of schools? Or receive several more lawsuits from a teacher's family or a student's family if he/she is infected with COVID-19 knowing the school environment was not safe to begin with.

The comment Governor Ige keeps making about how our hospitals are not at their capacity, so that means facilities have room for new COVID-19 cases. What?! So he's practically saying ***"When your child gets infected when he/she goes back to school, no worries! We have room in the hospital to take care of you child."*** Another reason not to open school facilities is because teachers (especially me) are not proficiently trained to do distance learning. Superintendent Kishimoto mentioned during the summer there was an optional training session to learn distance learning. First of all, OPTIONAL? Don't you think this training should have been mandatory? And then for Superintendent Kishimoto to thank those teachers who did attend the training, threw me (and I'm sure other teachers) under the bus because we couldn't make the training. For me personally, I couldn't make it because of my prior commitment to my summer job, which I do every year to help alleviate my financial burden during the school year. So please reconsider reopening school facilities until everyone involved can get the proper training.

Mr. Ibera

Gmail

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

Teacher Differentials

Sara Coronel <sacoronel@kamaile.org> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Representatives,

I am writing to you concerning the temporary discontinuance of the shortage differentials. I am a third grade teacher at Kamaile Academy. I would like to give you some perspective on how cutting teacher pay will negatively impact teachers at our school and our community. For one, the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex side already has a history of the highest levels of teacher shortage and lowest levels of teacher recruitment and retention on the island. Cutting the hard to staff differentials will make schools that are difficult to staff even more difficult to staff. Secondly, schools in low socioeconomic communities across the island are known to have significant issues with student behaviors, poverty, and lack of funding. This year, schools are being forced to cut teachers resulting in larger classes sizes. In my experience, 15-20 third grade students without full-time assistance and minimal educator assistant support is a challenge itself. It will be further challenging to manage large class sizes with COVID-19 and the lack of adequate resources. Teachers will be forced to pay for class sets of masks and cleaning supplies. Lastly, students that receive SPED services may be impacted by this decision as the differentials brought attention to hard to staff locations and more qualified teachers are now serving in these areas. There are numerous reasons and data supporting why cutting the differentials will negatively impact schools and student achievement. I do not support this decision. Teachers deserve to be compensated fairly, and I propose that there be an alternative solution rather then suspending the shortage differentials that does not harm educator and student livelihoods in hard to staff locations.

Mahalo,
Sara Coronel

Gmail

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

Testimony

Whitney Maiava <wmaiava10@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Whitney Maiava and I am a Special Education teacher at Kahala Elementary school. This is going to be my 8th year teaching Special Education for Hawaii DOE. Before this past year I was on the fence of deciding whether or not to leave the profession as a whole because of the great demand put on us as Special Education teachers. As Special Education teachers we are given the burden of staying late for the extra meetings sometimes lasting until 5 pm, and taking on the additional caseload of students because of the lack of highly qualified teachers that are serving as teachers in the SPED teaching lines at our schools. This continuous cycle year after year can only be tolerated for so long. When we were given the pay differential last year it felt as though all of our extra time and effort was finally being noticed. This is what made me stay in the profession I love and worked so hard for.

This upcoming year we will continue to have the same demands put upon us, plus the additional demand of providing compensatory services for IDEA eligible students in relation to the effects of COVID. The compensatory services will include scheduling additional meetings with students families, and providing additional services to the students before, during, or after school hours. We will be doing this all while trying to schedule services throughout the day so as to not mix the “family pods” the students are in.

With all that is expected of us as Special Education teachers during the regular school year, and now what is additionally expected of us this upcoming school year in result of COVID, it is hard to find the drive to continue down this career pathway. One thing that kept me motivated was the pay differential, not because it is all about the money, but because the differential showed that we are seen in all that we do as Special Educators. Taking that away in this trying time and during this school year of uncertainty will have contradictory effects for us throughout this fragile school year and in the years to come compared to what this differential was trying to do.

***Do not discontinue the extra compensation!

Mahalo,
Whitney Maiava
Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Fund Teacher Shortage Differentials!!!

Chelsea Welcker <chelseawelcker@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Do Not break your **PROMISE** to Hawaii teachers and not follow through with your approved funding of teacher shortage differentials. This is the time to show support for our educators. If you do not honor your promise qualified teachers will be gone. At this very moment you are asking us to risk our lives and our family's lives during a pandemic. You are asking us to risk our lives, yet you can't honor your promise. This is the moment when we need the support of the community and a living wage. If the Hawaii's teacher shortage worsens the educational system will collapse.

Gmail

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

Reject proposal to eliminate $10,000 pay

Corey Ishigo <kailuabaseball@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:10 AM
To: testimony.Boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

Because of Covid, special education teachers are being asked to do more then they have ever done. This would be a bad time to eliminate the $10,000 pay that we just had for 1/2 of a year.

Thank you,
Corey Ishigo
Kailua High SPED DH

Gmail

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

Reopening

Tiffany Schnittger <tschnittger@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:11 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board,

Aloha, my name is Tiffany Schnittger (pronounced /sh-niT-gur/ and I teach first grade at Holomua Elementary. Despite this meeting covering General Business, the elephant in the room remains the reopening on August 4th for Hawaii public schools, which I feel has not been developed even close to where we need to be for safety for the teachers and support staff, students and their families and the communities overall.

My biggest concerns after meeting with colleagues and asking questions, voting on new measures and thinking nearly non-stop about these issues for weeks are as follows:

1. The number of bodies in a classroom and the spacing throughout the day.
2. Masks are not mandatory! (They are "highly recommended")
3. Teachers are not health care trained professionals, but we are being asked to act as so.
4. Lack of PPE provided for teachers.
5. Lack of training for the amount of technology needed in 2 weeks.
6. If we fail, and a case is reported, the school closes...So what is the rush?

I have 19 students in my classroom so far this year, and any additional students could make 6 feet distancing impossible. How is it ok to pack a full classroom when the CDC guidelines clearly state 10 or less for group meetings? This point is the most overlooked and reckless detail that puts us all at risk.

Masks are non mandatory, so what happens if a family opts out? Can we as teachers refuse to allow the student in the classroom? Not making masks mandatory is unthinkable. Even stores can refuse service to those not wearing a mask. This puts teachers in a tough spot and puts the entire class and schools at risk.

Teachers are being asked to observe students for signs of illness. This is ridiculous on top of everything else. Temperature checks should be mandatory and done by trained health care professionals for the entire school and anyone who comes on campus. It's not foolproof, but it is the minimum done across the globe at schools for safety.

Teachers have been purchasing their own PPE for their safety, but this should be provided by the DOE and state of Hawaii to protect all teachers equally. By the way, I will be wearing a mask, glasses, face mask and even building a clear barrier around my desk with clear shower curtains and pvc. How are we supposed to even speak to our students? There are so many details to work out and we just are not ready.

Teachers are also creating online learning with an array of new apps and technology. I can tell you that all teachers have a steep learning curve with this aspect, and we need more time. Keep in mind that teachers will need to be experts to teach the kids and their families. We are not ready. That's a lot of lost time bumbling.

Finally, why rush the reopening? If a school has a reported case, the school will have to close, throwing us all back to online options, or square one. We should practice what we teach our students and prepare for success!

There are many other factors like recess and lunch, bathroom breaks and so much more. It feels very insecure to head back without the leadership to feel confident about the plan, and that starts from the top down. And Hawaii is better than that because we care about our residents and communities. We need more time to get the details right so we are not back to the drawing board after one or two weeks in...that would be more disruptive and even fatal.

Thank you,
Tiffany Schnittger

--
Tiffany Schnittger, M.Ed.
(808) 439-2238

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

Re: Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Julia Kang, I am a parent of Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino ma ka moku o Keawe. I am submitting testimony in support of continuing the pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
Located in South Kona, Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino is the only public K-12 Hawaiian medium school on Hawai'i Island, and only one of two in the state. Every year it is a challenge to fully staff our kula with the kumu and limahana needed for our keiki. Not only is it difficult to find kumu that can 'olelo Hawai'i as well as teach academic content, but we are also located in a geographic area that is hard to staff.

My child has to travel an extremely far distance just to get to school because Ke Kula O ‘Ehunuikaimalin is the only Hawaiian language immersion program on the west side of the island. We all make sacrifices to educate our children and due to the lack of staffing a pay cut would be detrimental to our children as they already get the scraps from the bottom of the pot as is.

Mahalo nui no kou kōkua,

Julia Kang
73-4206 Kiekie St.
Kailua Kona, HI 96740
808-443-8463

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Laura Robertson. I am a 12 year veteran teacher at Waimea Elementary School in the Hamakua District on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony to oppose agenda item G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please continue to provide the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to show that this BOE of Hawaii continues to value our hardworking teachers. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki and the future of our state economy. Temporarily discontinuing this compensation for this next school year will continue to impact our profession and communities in these areas significantly.

The differential we received for the second half of this past school year made a tremendous difference in being able to breathe a little easier financially. I know you hear many teachers are living paycheck to paycheck. It is still continuing even with the current differential we are receiving because I am one of them. I have two teens that I am supporting solely on my income. It is even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

I am a thrifty person and I spend my money wisely. My dollar is not being able to stretch nearly as far as I could before this crisis. Living so far away from main cities and trying to watch every penny I spend, will make me choose to leave my school and community I currently reside in because of the differential being taken away. I would have to relocate back to my parent's home which is on the

other side of the island in Mountain View (approximately 2 hours away from my school), then I would need to find a new school for my children, and someone else to watch them on days where they are not attending school. There will be a domino effect on teachers having to relocate due to stopping this differential. I know of teachers who have left the Hamakua area to go to the mainland. I continue to keep hearing more teachers in my area debating about leaving this profession completely because it doesn't pay enough to make a decent living which continues the teacher crisis shortage.

I didn't participate in the teacher transfer this year because I was receiving the differential and I made the decision to stay at my school believing this extra compensation pay was continuing. I thought this differential was a promise from the DOE and State that funds would be secured in order to extend the differential for us for the next school year. I have established myself in this community and school for my integrity, work ethics, and skills. I have built relationships with students so they feel prepared and successful for their next grade levels and beyond. It is not getting easier living in remote areas for our teachers. Keeping the differentials for our hard to staff geographical locations, special education, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs will keep highly qualified teachers in areas where there are still current teacher vacancies to fill with HQ teachers. Please keep the differentials to help teachers which in return supports students and parents within these communities.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,

Laura Robertson, Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

Gmail

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

Testimony

Loke Hill-Higgins <hillhigg@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:19 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing to urge you to continue the teacher shortage differentials. Since the differentials were implemented teachers leaving special education positions have decreased by 57%, and there was an increase in teachers transferring into special education positions by 29% over last year. These numbers speak volumes to the effect the differentials are making towards reducing the special education teacher shortages. The differentials are also extremely impactful for the students who have had qualified teachers as a result. Special education students have the most specialized needs, and most frequently, for way too long have been taught by the least qualified teachers due to shortages. Special education positions are frequently filled by substitute teachers, emergency hires, or left vacant and the work load increases for fellow special education teachers. By supporting the teacher shortage differentials you are demonstrating that special education matters.

I am a special education teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hilo for the past eight years. I have a masters degree in special education, specializing in autism. I feel very proud to have not succumbed to the statistics and made it past the first five years. I would like to continue to serve my community as a special education teacher yet the challenges of the position are a constant consideration. The shortage differential enables me to feel like all the extra work that I put in is recognized and valued. I strongly appeal to you to find a way to continue the teacher shortage differentials. At this time, more than ever we need to retain as many teachers as possible and provide special education students with qualified teachers. Please help us support us!

Respectfully,
Loke Hill-Higgins
Special Education Teacher

Gmail

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

Continued Funding for Teacher Shortage Differentials

Sydney Gonzales <syds329@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:33 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Esteemed BOE Members,

I am writing to appeal for the continued funding for Teacher Shortage Differentials. Over a year after its implementation, we have seen the high motivation and satisfaction of the dedicated and hardworking teachers of Hawaii Public Schools. I, for one, have been tremendously helped by this differentials in carrying out my tasks as a teacher and a mother.

The shortage differentials has greatly helped me advance my craft as it helps me pay for my Professional Development fees, seminars, and other work-related training that I need to improve my knowledge and skills as a teacher. Being a teacher with further degrees such as MFA in Theater Arts and PhD in Applied Linguistics, my passion to improve Hawaii Public Education and to serve our keikis keeps on motivating me to explore the varied areas of teaching, technology, and research. I cannot do all these without the extra funds that I can use to implement the programs that will inform my teaching practices and impact student growth.

Please help us teachers to continue receiving the shortage differentials for our keikis' future; We appreciate all the help and guidance that the BOE extends to HSTA. By working with us as our moral and social fabric, we can be assured of a reputable and bright future for all keikis and their families here in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and attention.

With high esteem,

Sydney Villegas, PhD
English Language Arts Teacher
Lahainaluna High School

Gmail

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

TESTIMONY

brad silva <bsilva42@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:41 AM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

To the Board,

I am writing to you as a SPED Middle School teacher of 18 years.

I am tired of writing about why we deserve what we were promised...but here I am again.

However, here is a promise I can get behind that I will make to you.

If you get rid of our SPED differentials:

I PROMISE I will not work as hard as I should
I PROMISE I will feel defeated and unappreciated
I PROMISE I will not work after or before hours to get tasks done
I PROMISE though, to just make sure my students stay physically safe and healthy in school.

What I did last year as a SPED teacher...I earned those differentials. To be asked to do the same and more this year without those same differentials...HELL NO!

Please give us what we were promised. In turn, I will do what I promised as an educator.

Thank you and do the right thing!
Brad Silva

Gmail

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

Testimony

HG <homegurl637@mail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:42 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Lela Kalama
General business meeting
Re: in person schooling
Strongly Oppose

I strongly oppose in person schooling. All schools should be required to give an online only option. Our kids are our world and we should have to choose between their schooling and their health. Pls make it mandatory for all schools, public or charter to have an option for online only.

Also I have heard of some schools saying if you homeschool your high school kids this year, they will not be given credits. I don't feel that is right to force in person schooling. I don't feel it is right to not give credits for homeschooling this year when last year credits were offered.

Mahalo,
Lela Kalama
Keaau, Hi

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

BOE meeting July 23rd, 1:30 pm testimony against cutting differentials

hughey2000@aol.com <hughey2000@aol.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 10:55 AM
Reply-To: hughey2000@aol.com
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Thursday, July 23, 2020 1:30p.m.

II. Public Testimony on Board of Education Agenda Item. Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year

The first ten years as an Elementary Special Education teacher I had to work full time waiting tables at a Restaurant in order to pay rent. Four years ago, after a decade of working two full time jobs, I suffered a slipped disc and was out of work for a year and a half. My wife teaches Science at Maui High. Before my injury we were both working second jobs to make ends meet. After having a child a year ago, we were unable to work second jobs and decided that we needed to move to a state that adequately pays teachers.

In 2019 I made $58,000 with a Masters Degree and 15 years of experience as a Special Education Teacher. In one district in Washington State I would make $105,000. My wife would make around $85,000 instead of $60,000 with her PHD. That is $70,000 more in net income. We were planning to move away for this 2020 school year, until the Governor announced his plan to fund differentials last December. The differentials enabled us to change our mind about moving because we could finally afford daycare!

It is irresponsible to take the differentials away at this time for the following reasons;

1. Teachers can’t apply for a different job at this time.
2. Teachers can no longer change our current health care plan which could have created $500 additional funds monthly.
3. The teachers who moved into a position for the differentials have no recourse.
4. The data shows the program was successful and a record amount of residents with degrees could easily fill the teacher shortage, if you follow through with the differentials that were promised.
5. Finally, taking away what was promised is extremely irresponsible and will have long lasting negative effects on our profession.

Justin Hughey
3rd Grade Special Education Teacher
HSTA Head Faculty Rep at King Kamehameha III Elementary
Democratic Party State Central Committee Education Caucus Member

Hard-to-Fill and other pay differentials...

Laura Peterson <laurarenrich@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:01 AM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha from Molokai!

Where the prices are high
for food and gas,
and the rents are inflated
for Section 8

Where teachers paid more
for internet and data plans
to work from home
and keep their students successful

Where the special education teachers
work so many hours
writing IEPs and holding meetings
It's a miracle they stay

Where Hawaiian Immersion
is an island-wide pride
and expected to be
a school within a school

Teachers love students
and they love their profession
used to paying out of pocket
for classroom luxuries

Such as folders, pencils, cellphone stations,
colored paper and colored ink
All decisions still made
with student's best interest in mind

They struggled with internet,
they did home visits with masks on,
they gave 120 students and parents
their cellphone numbers

They called, they emailed, they WebExed,
they were successful ensuring
100% of their students were learning...
Don't cut their pay in return

Laura Peterson
Molokai High School
Student Services Coordinator

Gmail

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

Testimony: Action Item G

Michelle Hakes <michelle.hakes@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am submitting testimony on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
My name is Michelle Hakes and I have been a special education teacher for nearly 24 years in Hawaii. I teach at Pearl City High.
The differential has greatly assisted my decision to remain a teacher of special needs children.
I mean I get it, no tourism dollars until September. I understand there has to be give and take in every situation. Every week the governor hints at furloughs. Losing the differential AND having a furlough will hit my paycheck really hard. I won't have enough money for my rent. I would have to put furniture in storage and move from a 1 bedroom to a 3 bedroom if I can find a place. I hated it during the last furlough: my living room became a bedroom for my children. I don't want to live like that again.
Additionally, I work odd jobs on call to make sure I can afford my rent and bills now. Those jobs have vanished and I am currently seeking other opportunities.. Having the differential means I have to take less side jobs in different industries so I can focus on putting forth more effort to work on the needs of our special education students.
On top of teaching like the general education teachers and correcting work, creating lessons, and providing feedback, Special education teachers have to gather data from teachers, create an IEP draft plan, meet with parents, input documents into ecsss, provide support for students in general education classes, coordinate with service providers... and the list goes on.
Special education teachers deserve this differential for the additional amount of work that they put in for their students.
Thank you for reading this. I appreciate it.
-- Michelle Hakes
Transition Coordinator
Hali'a Aloha Yearbook Adviser

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7/23/20
General Business Meeting
BOE Testimony

My name is Derek Govin. I am a Special Education Teacher at Roosevelt High School (RHS) for our Community-Based Instruction Program and our Department Head. Everything I say in this testimony are my own words, and not to be representative of Roosevelt High School or any of the other teachers of RHS faculty.

D. Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress

I **oppose** schools opening in the manner that the HIDOE intends to do so. I cannot with confidence believe we will be safely entering schools, able to do “contact tracing” using the bubble method in a high school, and keep my staff and students safe in the school day. I do not support the BOE to approve this action step.

G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

I **oppose** the board action to temporarily discontinue the extra compensation for special education, HTS, and HI language immersion programs for the upcoming school year. My question would be, “At what point would the ‘temporary discontinuance’ be revisited to reinstate the compensation that is so very deserved by our classroom teachers in these respective areas?” Without clarification on understanding pay cuts, how or why would I support this notion for myself, other faculty members, and my personal friends who are teachers?

Gmail

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

testimony

Martha Smith <hanamauimartha@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a special education teacher at Hana High & Elementary. This decision would negatively impact me via two discontinued differentials. This decision would negatively impact my child, a student at the same school, due to a decreased ability to provide her with qualified teachers.

The Board must not approve the discontinuance of extra compensation for certain teachers. These differentials have been pledged to us and should not be seen as an easy way to balance the budget.

This decision would impact every single teacher in our community since we all receive the hard-to-staff compensation. Our unemployment rate in Hana right now is catastrophic. Teachers' salaries positively impact our entire community since, in many cases, these salaries are keeping an entire family afloat. If my pay were to be drastically cut right now, my family would not be able to meet our most basic needs.

Please consider that in the best of times, Hana has a problem retaining qualified teachers. This past school year, we had an experienced teacher from the mainland join our staff, only to leave after one semester. That's pre-COVID that we could not retain a teacher for even an entire school year. Right now, we are being asked to return to an environment where our safety is not certain. To add a pay cut to that equation is unconscionable. It would most certainly deter qualified applicants from considering joining our staff. I learned recently that a seasoned colleague is not returning to school this coming year because of his concerns regarding health and safety. He made this decision before the idea that his pay might be cut even arose. If these cuts go through, how will we fill his position? How would it possibly be more attractive to a new teacher than it was to him, if the pay is substantially lower?

If the Board approves this action, it might help a short-term budget problem but it will have long-term effects. The teacher shortage is already a crisis. This action would certainly worsen the crisis and lead to a collapse of the public education system, with the victims being our children. Please find another way to balance the budget that isn't on our children's backs.

Mahalo.

Martha Smith
Hana High & Elementary
Special Education Teacher & Parent of a Grade 9 Student

Gmail

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

Teachers deserve and have earned differentials

Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha
If you require teachers to return and teach face to face in order to open schools during an active pandemic the least you can do is fund and distribute the hard to staff differentials. You should be offering hazard pay too. The BOE has a responsibility to teachers!
The outcome of your decisions will be your legacy, please think about all the stakeholders in your plans and above all remain humble and know that you don't know how your decisions will play out in the real world. I wish you resiliency to make tough decisions to protect our communities and their loved ones. Safety is our number one concern!
Mahalo
Rachel Silverman
Kailua Kona Resident
Science Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Opposition to Defering Teacher Shortage Differentials

Tianzhen Nie <tianie@kamaile.org> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Tianzhen Nie and I am a second-year teacher on the Waianae Coast at Kamaile Academy. I am writing to provide testimony against the deferring of teacher shortage differentials, as I believe this will significantly negatively impact the livelihoods of myself, my colleagues, and my students.

Historically, the purpose of these differentials is to incentivize teachers to take on positions in hard-to-staff areas, including Hawaiian immersion, special education, and geographically inconvenient school districts. During this pandemic, we have all been discussing the inequity in education, and these are ways that the Board of Education has been doing a good job already in addressing these inequities. When talking about reopening schools under the Act with Care measures, our most vulnerable students (i.e. those with IEPs, 504s, and ILPs) are the ones prioritized for in-person instruction. In order to meet these students' needs, particularly amidst a pandemic, special educators have been going above and beyond to ensure their students receive the necessary supports and services they need. Many of my special educator colleagues work round the clock to provide services to more students than they can manage, given that our school's special education department has been historically understaffed. I know that there are multiple teachers at my school who are only staying at Kamaile due to the special education and/or geographic differentials, and eliminating these differentials will cause our students to further lose access to a quality education.

In addition, I believe that the geographic differential needs to be kept. Many teachers that work at my school are in situations such as the one I am in, in which we live in town and commute to Waianae every day. For me, the incentive of the differential alleviates the stress of the 2+ hour commute roundtrip daily. However, were this differential to be removed and I had the same pay out in Waianae that I had working in town, I would no longer be motivated to commute and would look to apply for jobs far closer to my place of residence.

Lastly, and I cannot stress this enough, this differential must continue to be distributed for teachers that work in both charter schools and DOE schools. This year, due to unclear language that charter schools would similarly receive these differentials, many of my colleagues at my own and other charter schools were negatively impacted. Differentials they believed to have been promised to everyone were unavailable for them, which moving forward I know would definitely push teachers currently in the charter schools to move away from their schools if not for the differentials.

Again, I urge you to please keep these differentials for all teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographic regions, and Hawaiian immersion schools. In addition, for these differentials to remain for both charter and DOE schools, as teachers working in charter schools are doing just as much as their DOE counterparts for their students.

Mahalo nui loa,
Tianzhen Nie

--
Tianzhen Nie
Secondary Science Teacher
Kamaile Academy PCS

Gmail

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

Testimony

Una Burns <unaburns@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Una Burns
Teacher/Registrar
WHEA PCS

Dear BOE:

I absolutely understand what a difficult time we are all in. These past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted the state's overall revenue and budget. There is hope though that the Heroes Act will pass making emergency supplemental appropriations available to Hawaii: We would receive $303 million in education funding if the Senate passed the HEROES Act. The K-12 portion of these funds would provide Hawaii $197 million.

New figures prove that for those schools that got differentials--it worked! Please do not get rid of a program that actually has a positive effect on our education and our most precious commodity, our children. The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in very important shortage areas.The number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent.

Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations.

Again, I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students.

Even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. Slashing educators' pay will be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread. If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system.

Thank you for your time and previous support but please have it in your heart to continue the differentials.

Una Burns

Gmail

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

Continue Differentials

Briann Starkey <kekamaboy4@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:
I am a Hawaiian Immersion teacher on the island of Molokaʻi and have been teaching in the only Public Charter Elementary School that offers education in the Hawaiian Language. The differential has helped me remain in my position and by retracting, it will negatively impact me and my students who are eager to learn Hawaiian.
The amount of extra work I have put forth by translating existing school-wide curriculums and having to create assignments are not by far, as easy as it is to download worksheets from the internet for other educators. There definitely is a lot of work and thought into placed-based learning and curriculum development all through ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi.
Please do not take back and discourage desires for young children to learn our mother language because our certified language teachers are not worth the time and effort.
Same goes for Special Education teachers. They have extra duties on top of being in-classroom teachers and deserve to be compensated as well. There has been a growth rate of Sped teachers since the differentials have been put into place.
Thank you for your consideration.
Briann Starkey

Gmail

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

Testimony

landfordjudith@gmail.com <landfordjudith@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Judith Landford

BOE meeting 7/23/2020
Reopening schools
Agenda: VI-D
Comment

My household consists of 12 family members, (3 generations.)

The age span is from 15 months of age up to 2 individuals in their 70's.

We have 6 children living with us; 5 are attending Elem., Jr. High, or High School.

We have been observing recommended cautionary measures throughout this health scare.

As it is, up until now, we have been pretty successful in keeping the children and Kapuna safe.

I fear that opening the schools without clearly establishing a safer learning environment, may not be well thought out.

Our home has a baby and the 2 elderly Kapuna as the main concern we face. Both the Kapuna's have existing health problems. To rush the school openings causes great concern to our family.

I humbly request a thorough review of your procedures incorporating input from parents, teachers, food service staff and custodial staff....not just BOE members.

Mahalo.

Sent from my LG V35 ThinQ, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kari Stagno <kari.stagno@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Kari Handley, and I am a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Special Ed) at Lehua Elementary School in Leeward District. I am testifying on VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

This past school, the BOE passed funding for a differential for Special Education, hard-to-staff, and Hawaiian immersion teachers in an effort to keep teachers in these vital positions and encourage those who are qualified to come into a position to try to end the teacher shortage.

This differential was a tremendous blessing to me and my family. I had been considering starting a Masters program to further myself as a teacher, but financially, it would be a hardship for us. With the differential, I am able to save up for the Masters program. I am starting courses this fall semester. If this differential is discontinued, I won't be able to pursue this degree.

Further, it will put my family and I in a bind. I may need to pick up a third job just to provide for our basic needs. As it stands now, we aren't able to qualify for a home loan. I would hate to have to leave the profession and the state of Hawaii due to this, but that may be a reality we face.

Please consider this and continue to fund the Special Education, hard-to-staff, and Hawaiian immersion teacher differentials.

Thank you,
Kari Handley
Lehua Elementary School

Testimony (7/23/2020): Reformatted/Edited

Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:19 AM
Reply-To: "Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara" <pkstonefield@ymail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

21 July 2020

Keith Ishihara: Public school teacher, HIDOE (24 years)
Patricia Ishihara: Public school teacher, HIDOE (29 years)
General Business Meeting
Agenda item VI-D
Oppose (opening August 4)/Comment

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Keith Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 24 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending a Hawaii public school.

My name is Patricia Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 29 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending a Hawaii public school.

We are both in what is considered an "at-risk category". Regardless of safety measures in place, there is still no guarantee of complete protection. We care for two elderly parents in our home, and one parent who lives elsewhere. We do NOT want to transmit anything to them since they are in a "high-risk category".

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html

Data is very important as we all know. There was a large study in South Korea and this study showed that middle and high school students can transmit the virus just as much as adults do. Even though it's in South Korea, the virus is not bound by nationality or ethnicity.

Here is an article (and a link to the study with data) published by the New York Times with a weblink to the actual study:

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/10/20-1315_article

Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds
The study of nearly 65,000 people in South Korea suggests that school reopenings will trigger more outbreaks.
By Apoorva Mandavilli
New York Times
July 18, 2020
Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds (account required to read)

In the heated debate over reopening schools, one burning question has been whether and how efficiently children can spread the virus to others.

A large new study from South Korea offers an answer: Children younger than 10 transmit to others much less often than adults do, but the risk is not zero. And those between the ages of 10 and 19 can spread the virus at least as well as adults do.

The findings suggest that as schools reopen, communities will see clusters of infection take root that include children of all ages, several experts cautioned.

“I fear that there has been this sense that kids just won’t get infected or don’t get infected in the same way as adults and that, therefore, they’re almost like a bubbled population,” said Michael Osterholm, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Minnesota.

“There will be transmission,” Dr. Osterholm said. “What we have to do is accept that now and include that in our plans.”

Several studies from Europe and Asia have suggested that young children are less likely to get infected and to spread the virus. But most of those studies were small and flawed, said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute.

The new study “is very carefully done, it’s systematic and looks at a very large population,” Dr. Jha said. “It’s one of the best studies we’ve had to date on this issue.”

Other experts also praised the scale and rigor of the analysis. South Korean researchers identified 5,706 people who were the first to report Covid-19 symptoms in their households between Jan. 20 and March 27, when schools were closed, and then traced the 59,073 contacts of these “index cases.” They tested all of the household contacts of each patient, regardless of symptoms, but only tested symptomatic contacts outside the household.

The first person in a household to develop symptoms is not necessarily the first to have been infected, and the researchers acknowledged this limitation. Children are also less likely than adults to show symptoms, so the study may have underestimated the number of children who set off the chain of transmission within their households.

Still, experts said the approach was reasonable. “It is also from a place with great contact tracing, done at the point interventions were being put in place,” said Bill Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Children under 10 were roughly half as likely as adults to spread the virus to others, consistent with other studies. That may be because children generally exhale less air — and therefore less virus-laden air — or because they exhale that air closer to the ground, making it less likely that adults would breathe it in.

Even so, the number of new infections seeded by children may rise when schools reopen, the study authors cautioned. “Young children may show higher attack rates when the school closure ends, contributing to community transmission of Covid-19,” they wrote. Other studies have also suggested that the large number of contacts for schoolchildren, who interact with dozens of others for a good part of the day, may cancel out their smaller risk of infecting others.

The researchers traced the contacts only of children who felt ill, so it’s still unclear how efficiently asymptomatic children spread the virus, said Caitlin Rivers, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

“I think it was always going to be the case that symptomatic children are infectious,” she said. “The questions about the role of children are more around whether children who don’t have symptoms are infectious.”

Dr. Rivers was a member of a scientific panel that on Wednesday recommended reopening schools wherever possible for disabled children and for those in elementary schools, because those groups have the most trouble learning online. She said the new study does not alter that recommendation.

The study is more worrisome for children in middle and high school. This group was even more likely to infect others than adults were, the study found. But some experts said that finding may be a fluke or may stem from the children's behaviors.

These older children are frequently as big as adults, and yet may have some of the same unhygienic habits as young children do. They may also have been more likely than the younger children to socialize with their peers within the high-rise complexes in South Korea.

"We can speculate all day about this, but we just don't know," Dr. Osterholm said. "The bottom line message is: There's going to be transmission."

He and other experts said schools will need to prepare for infections to pop up. Apart from implementing physical distancing, hand hygiene and masks, schools should also decide when and how to test students and staff — including, for example, bus drivers — when and how long to require people to quarantine, and when to decide to close and reopen schools.

But they face a monumental challenge because the evidence on transmission within schools has been far from conclusive so far, experts said. Some countries like Denmark and Finland have successfully reopened schools, but others, like China, Israel and South Korea, have had to close them down again.

"People, depending on their ideology on school opening, are choosing which evidence to present — and that needs to be avoided," said Jeffrey Shaman, an epidemiologist at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health in New York.

Although the new study does not offer definitive answers, he said, it does indicate that schools can increase virus levels within a community.

"So long as children are not just a complete dead end — incapable of passing the virus on, which does not seem to be the case — putting them together in schools, having them mix with teachers and other students will provide additional opportunities for the virus to move from person to person," he said.

At the same time, Dr. Shaman said, it's important for children not to miss out on critical years in education and socialization, and school districts have the unenviable task of choosing between those options: "It's hard trying to find the right balance."

Next, here is an article from a teacher who sums up exactly how we and many other teachers feel. There are weblinks within the article.

Teacher's Take on Reopening Schools Goes Viral: "I Don't See ANY Consideration for the Adults"
"You're asking us to accept going back into classrooms in the middle of a pandemic."
By Audrey Goodson Kingo
Workingmother.com

July 6, 2020

As the beginning of the school year rapidly approaches in much of the country, many districts still haven't decided if students will attend in-person or not.

Working parents are worried about how they'll continue to juggle their job with online learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics, which released a statement that "strongly advocates" for in-person instruction, cited concerns about kids.

But a teacher for Charlottesville City Schools in Virginia says one very important group has been neglected during these very important discussions: teachers and other support staff who keep schools running.

"I don't see ANY consideration for the adults in school buildings in all the articles calling for schools to open," says Christine Esposito, who teaches 6th grade honors language arts, in a Facebook post that has now been shared over 6,000 times.

"I've seen the research. Kids are, as much as we can determine barely six months into a pandemic, less likely to get it. They're less likely to suffer from a severe form of the disease, possibly less likely to transmit it. The calls for opening schools with this data make total sense," she acknowledges, before pointing out the (literal) fatal flaw in this logic: Grown-ups help schools run, too, and they are *very* susceptible to COVID-19. She's not only worried about her own safety—she's worried about her parents, her fellow teachers, the custodial staff, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and instructional assistants who are far more likely to be BIPOC, and thus more likely to suffer severe complications.

"When you're out there demanding that schools open and all of your arguments are about you, about what you need, about what your kids need, but NEVER ONCE mention the dangers to the staff and faculty who will necessarily need to be in those schools, you can see where I'm a little concerned," she says.

The AAP's recommendations for reopening do provide some guidance on minimizing the spread of COVID-19 between adults in school settings. "Given what is known about transmission dynamics, adults and adult staff within schools should attempt to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other persons as much as possible, particularly around other adult staff," the statement reads.

The statement also suggests all meetings and curriculum planning take place virtually, and that schools should stagger pickups and dropoffs, if possible. "Physical barriers, such as plexiglass, should be considered in reception areas and employee workspaces where the environment does not accommodate physical distancing, and congregating in shared spaces, such as staff lounge areas, should be discouraged."

In her post, Christine makes a very salient point about those guidelines and others: Many public schools are already underfunded. How will districts pay for the protective gear and strategies that are needed to keep everyone safe?

"Since, for the entire two decades I've been teaching, we've been asking parents to donate basic school supplies because we can't or won't adequately fund education, you might see where we're a little hesitant to go back into those classrooms without masks, without face shields, because masks don't work with the littlest kids (though face shields really aren't nearly as effective as masks, but…), without any promise of reliable, regular testing with a quick turnaround of results, without any plan for what happens when someone gets sick, without any plan for what staff and faculty do when someone in their family is sick, without any plan on how we help parents who need the childcare, so they're forced to give kids Tylenol in order to get through the temperature screening so they don't lose their job, without any promise of additional money to hire more teachers, to lease more space, to scale up what distance learning will or could look like," she says.

That being said, Christine knows that there's good reason to be worried about kids too. "I know they need to be back at school. I saw how distance learning went this spring. It wasn't pretty," she acknowledges. "We're going to be facing kids who are dealing with layer upon layer of trauma, we need to make time and space for that, so stop telling me kids are behind. They're not any further behind than anyone else. They're behind some arbitrary lines we drew in the sand so long ago we're not sure we remember why we drew them. We need to meet our kids where they are. ***I don't want to hear one word about testing, unless it involves a nasal or throat swab.*** Not. One. Word."

Christine's final thoughts sum up the grim situation perfectly: Kids and teachers are being asked to make sacrifices while other adults refuse to do so.

"The worst part about this is the completely cavalier attitude I see from far too many about doing what needs to be done if you have even half a prayer of opening schools this fall. Wear a mask. Stay home," she says. "If you can't do any of those things, but want me to go back to school in August with a smile on my face, you're asking me to make far bigger sacrifices than the ones you've been willing to make so far."

Please also note the paragraph about testing. That only adds to the trauma. At my (Keith's) school, we are giving students a 4.5 hour test on each of two half-days on the second week of school. And those days are only the third and fourth day since school begins. That is not how students should start their days back. And the reasoning behind it is because the HIDOE mandates that we give students assessments to find the gaps (the Return to Learn Principal's Handbook on the HIDOE website http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%202.pdf (Page 16, it says within the first two weeks of school). We all know where the gaps are. How about we teach the students, give assessment tasks within the lessons, and THEN report the gaps after a month or so? Why are we anxious to report data so soon?

Here is a great reopening plan from the Teachers' Union in Massachusetts: https://www.wgbh.org/news/education/2020/07/15/massachusetts-teachers-unions-unveil-four-phased-reopening-plan

Phase 1: Give teachers and other school personnel time to set up classrooms, learn about new health and safety protocols, prepare for students' return and have professional development.

Phase 2: Allow educators to meet the students and their families, either virtually or in-person. In addition to using the time to explain the new health protocols, the letter says this stage will be "used for social emotional wellness checks, basic needs assessments, an evaluation of technology needs and reconnecting with students, families and school communities."

Phase 3: Instruction would then begin around a month later — either remotely, in person, or a combination of the two. The letter states that the academic curriculum "should be informed by what students need and by what will engage them," and should be created by ground-level educators. "Business-as-usual instructional approaches — organized around 'covering the curriculum,' test prep and test administration — must be avoided, as these will distract from real learning, cause unneeded stress, and produce meaningless results in the case of standardized tests," the Union states.

Phase 4: An assessment of educational progress and public health, and should take place six to eight weeks after school starts. In this phase, schools will decide whether to continue as planned or change course.

We appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of COVID-19 in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. We, as teachers, are disheartened to hear us as being "a test case" for the rest of the nation. Yes, children may not get sick or critically ill, but they can be asymptomatic carriers that infect adults (especially at-risk adults like us) on campus. And then those educators' families will be put at risk too, especially if they care for kupuna (like we do). We do not want to be in the situation where we get the virus ***at all***. Regardless of how many medical facilities we have. **COVID-19 is not curable! Who knows what will happen to any one person who contracts it? We do not want to take that chance since we (and our kupuna that we take care of) are at-risk.** Even Dr. Bruce Anderson said at the most recent Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 hearing that we will probably have transmission in schools! It is a cavalier attitude by anyone who believes that statement AND still wants schools to open that disregards any adult educator's health who is at-risk and high-risk (30-40% of educators).

We have to care for **ALL** people, not just a select few. Government is "for *the people*."

The only recourse teachers have is to take sick leave. "For how long?" our doctor asks. To which we can only say, "We don't know." A Quarter or a Semester? By which time we would probably use up our sick leaves. And can you see how a doctor would not feel comfortable approving sick leave when we are not actually sick? Our doctor told us that this is a first for him. Or apply for "disability" (following ADA guidelines) which we would probably not qualify for (per our doctor) since we are only "at-risk" but not in the "high-risk" category. What other options would we have except to quit or retire early?

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns we have expressed.

Best regards,
Keith and Patricia Ishihara
Pearl City

Gmail

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

Teacher Pay Differentials

Sandra Gusman <sandyg967@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Sandra Gusman and I teach at Kohala Elementary School on the island of Hawaii. We are a geographically isolated school in a small rural community. As such, we have a large population of low socioeconomic-status students. We are considered a hard-to-staff area.

For me, teaching is a second career; one in which I chose deliberately. I was born and raised in Kohala, went to college on the mainland, and was fortunate to be able to afford to return to live in Kohala.

I provide this background to show that I am about as dedicated to teaching at Kohala as one can get. This is my home and my community and I chose teaching to make a difference in the lives of children and families in my own community. Despite my dedication, I have considered leaving the profession for the last couple of years. Compared with the time, effort, and money that I personally commit to my job, I am severely underpaid and work with a high level of stress. Receiving the hard-to-staff pay differential this past school year has given me the hope that the teaching profession is getting better; and I have since decided to give it another couple years to see if the trend continues.

Please honor the continued payment of these pay differentials. Please commit to the well-being of our keiki and to continue the effort of increasing equity to disadvantaged youth by incentivising teachers to work with some of our more challenging keiki and to work in some of our more challenging areas.

Respectfully,
Sandra Gusman

Gmail

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

Testimony

Jaimee-Ann Endo <jaimee.endo@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

My name is Jaimee Uemura. I am a public school teacher here on Oahu. I am submitting testimony for your General Business Meeting regarding Action item D. Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening school for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and students academic status and progress. Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association: 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I strongly oppose the openings of schools face to face on August 4, 2020. I don't feel that DOE has a well thought out plan to keep teachers and students safe. There are too many unanswered questions regarding policies, procedures, and guidelines on the opening of schools. Mask wearing should be mandated not left up to the teacher. I don't think that DOH knows the reality of being in school and the exposure risks. The idea of "ohana" bubbles makes no sense in a school setting. Students and teachers will come into contact with so many others within a school day. It is also worrying that our communities are not practicing safe behaviors because the number of COVID cases are still in the double digits and community spread is prevalent. If the state wants to open schools, then our communities need to take more responsibility in showing a conscious effort to reduce exposure. For the safety of all, face to face opening of school should be delayed and distance learning should resume on August 4 until proper plans are made and community spread is under control. Teachers, parents, and students need to feel safe returning to the classroom. We do not feel that way in our current situation. Please consider all who are affected by this plan. Thank you.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Zellie Kamahele <zelliek@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern I an testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**. My name is Zellie Kamahele, I work as a special education teacher at Kailua Intermediate School and also have a complex care needs child that attends a public school near by. Although there may be budget cuts it should not be in the area of the “extra” compensation of special education. In this last year of school it was an insane switch that had not only adjusting of lessons but also adjusting for special education teachers to be able to somehow still figure out how to meet with students to address their individual supports and needs. We are already doing a lot on top of teaching, especially if you are a coteachers like myself, bit also during Covid closure there were many late nights and work that took time to make sure I was meeting the needs of my students to the best of my ability. While still recording their data, communication with parents and other teachers, teaching, raising children of my own, and somehow getting sleep. I love my job and what I do and how I can help students gain confidence in areas they struggle with, however, the amount of time and energy it takes to be a special education teacher is not similar to a general educator and I would hate to leave a position that is very much NEEDED for one because of the ease and pay being the same. Please take into consideration that these differentials can close the gap of hard to staff areas, special educators, Hawaiian language educators and help our students succeed. Now more than ever, special education teachers are needed because the more time that students have spent away from Face to face instruction, the recovery time for students can be a dramatic regression.
Thank you,
Zellie Kamahele

Gmail

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

testimony

Kim Dempsey <kim.dempsey@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha

I am writing to provide testimony on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

With the budget concerns resulting from COVID, I certainly understand the motivation for "looking" for money. However, given that we are on the doorstep of returning to school and putting ourselves on the frontlines during this time, I see this move as creating a negative impact for schools and keiki.

I have personally seen COVID eliminating qualified, experienced teachers from our workforce. This retraction could further compound this problem. Hawaii teachers are underpaid compared to national averages, and that is without taking cost of living into consideration. Retracting the differentials during a time when there are increased risks with our profession is an insult and demonstrates a lack of value placed on the profession in the State of Hawaii.

For the sake of our schools and keiki, please reject the proposal to retract differentials.

Mahalo,
Kim Dempsey
Kealakehe Intermediate School
Where Relationships are at the Heart of all Learning

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Jun Shin <noreply@jotform.com> Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 9:23 PM
Reply-To: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Jun Shin
Email	junshinbusiness729@gmail.com
Subject	8082556663
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

You can edit this submission and view all your submissions easily.

Gmail

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Justin MH Salisbury <noreply@jotform.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 1:27 AM
Reply-To: president@alumni.ecu.edu
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Justin MH Salisbury
Email	president@alumni.ecu.edu
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	I am a blind person, and I went through public schools. I am also a teacher of the blind. I was a government employee in Hawaii, and I left in the past year because I simply could not afford to continue to live in my beautiful island home with the meager paycheck I received. I understand that government service is "not just a paycheck," or "more than a paycheck," but those other forms of compensation don't pay my rent, can't buy me groceries, and can't give me healthcare. I now live in a majority-black city with crumbling infrastructure and schools full of asbestos. When I came to work here, my pay increased by 50 percent, and my cost of living decreased substantially. Even though society doesn't value my students at all, I am still paid far more than I was paid in Hawaii. Today, Hawaii has no teachers in the DOE with the proper licensures to teach braille (NCUEB) or cane travel (NOMC) for blind children. It is likely to stay that way because we still don't pay enough. I would love to return home, but I simply cannot afford it. We need to invest in teacher training to address the critical lack of competency in the DOE staff, but we also need to pay teachers in a way that demonstrates that they are important. It's hard for any human being to take their job seriously if the message from the employer is that they are not valued. It's hard for teachers to teach effectively if they struggle with housing instability, mountains of medical debt, or food insecurity. Please do all that you can to support our teachers. Our keiki depend on it.

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Gmail

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

John Bickel <noreply@jotform.com>
Reply-To: jbickel15@yahoo.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:53 AM

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	John Bickel
Email	jbickel15@yahoo.com
Subject	8087289682
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

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

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!

Josh Frost <noreply@jotform.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:57 AM
Reply-To: josh.frost@me.com
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Josh Frost
Email	josh.frost@me.com
Subject	Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!
Message	Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds. Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse. According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent. Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers, upon whom our keiki's future depends.

You can edit this submission and view all your submissions easily.

Gmail

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

Opposition to Item G

Shelby Greene <educshelbygreene@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:33 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Shelby Greene (although I have just married and will soon be Shelby Olofson!). I have been in Hawai'i with my now husband for five years working at Kohala High School in the HKKK complex on West Hawaii. This is my testimony *against* Item G on the Board Agenda that would discontinue the hard to staff differentials.

Im our five years, this January was the first year that I was able to pay off some of my debts rather than accumulating debt despite reclassing several times. Finally, with the differentials, *one* of my paychecks can cover my rent, allowing me to pay for groceries and other bills out of my paycheck rather than with credit cards.

My husband and I flew to Indiana to get married with our families. Had it not been for the differentials, we would have moved permanently. We agreed to try to stay one more year despite financial hardship because of these differentials.

If they are cancelled, I will have to move in the midst of the school year. We simply can't afford to live here on the salary that I'm allotted for the course that I put in each week. We are trying to start a family, and I can't be a mother and work two jobs while my husband also works full time.

Thank you for your time and service,

Ms. Shelby R. Greene | B.S. Mathematics, M.S.Ed. Secondary Mathematics Education
Kohala High School | Mathematics Department Chair & Educator
Geometry | AP Calculus AB | AP Computer Science Principles | UH-M075 Intro to College Math
2021 Class Advisor

54-3611 Akoni Pule Highway/Box 279 | Kapa'au, HI 96755 | (808) 889-7117 ext. 239

Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world. Nelson Mandela

Support My Students HERE: https://www.donorschoose.org/Shelby.Greene

Gmail

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

The discontinuance of hard to staff and special education differentials

Pamela Walton <pamela.walton@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:33 AM

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Pamela Walton. I am a 26 year teacher at Waimea Elementary School in the Hamakua District on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony to oppose agenda item G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please continue to provide the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to show that this BOE of Hawaii continues to value our hardworking teachers. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki and the future of our state economy. Temporarily discontinuing this compensation for this next school year will continue to impact our profession and communities in these areas significantly.

The differential we received for the second half of this past school year made a tremendous difference in being able live a little easier financially. I know you hear many teachers are living paycheck to paycheck. It is still continuing even with the current differential we are receiving because I am one of them. I have bills, house payment, and ect. to pay as a single parent. It is even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

I am a single mother, who has been raising my two elementary school age children on my own. I have worked in Special Education for 26 years and I have always worked with the very high end emotional students as well as the students who have high medical needs. Taking this differential away from the Special Education teachers will put a hardship on my family, since I am a single parent and the sole provider for my children. If this differential gets taken away then I will have to look at early retirement to try and find a job that will value my skills and pay so I can support my family.

Mahalo for your time and understanding.

Pamela Walton, Hamakua District, Hawaii, Island

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Testimony

Karly Kanehiro <karly.kanehiro@campbell.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:43 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher, it is never enough. There is always something more that is being asked of us to provide for our students, parents, and community.

One of the reasons why we chose this profession is because of the students. We aren't teachers because of the magnificent pay or benefits, but because of the impact that we can have on our students. Don't get me wrong, I miss my students terribly, and there is nothing more that I want than to be there for them during these uncertain and scary times. But now, the state is asking us to choose between our love of teaching children and the health and safety of ourselves, the students, and our families.

There are no second chances when it comes to this virus. One mistake, one cough, one person that doesn't socially distance, one person that goes to a large gathering, one person that is tested positive that lives in a multi-generational household, and that's it. 0 is the correct number of lives that should be risked by going to school in person. So, let's not take that chance, and start schools online.

A lot of us have not received any of the training in safety protocols, how to teach them to the students, or received any training in regards to distance learning that Superintendent Kishimoto keeps mentioning, and school starts in two weeks. We are nowhere near ready to go back to school for face to face instruction. Because of this, we need to start school online, then once deemed safe we can opt for the hybrid model.

I hope you will continue to listen to the needs of the people in the community as our lives depend on it.

--
Karly Kanehiro
Social Studies Teacher
James Campbell High School
Room M-104
(808)305-3760

Gmail

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

Testimony : VERY IMPORTANT: Continue Funding our Differentials

M Foley <foley230@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii BOE,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. It is extremely important that the HBOE continues funding for teacher shortage differentials.

This action will hurt our most vulnerable keiki as it will destroy our dwindling supply of qualified teachers. I am a 2nd grade inclusion teacher at Makaha Elementary. My students come to school with severe trauma and from a low socio economic community. Due to this, we need the strongest and best teachers to support these students. As a teacher in this community, I know that educators have to do much more than a "normal teaching job" to support these students. A temporary discontinuance of extra compensation will diminish the number of necessary educators to continue supporting these students who need us so much.

Like I said, I am a 2nd grade teacher at Makaha Elementary. Please support your teachers and your most vulnerable keiki even during this unprecedented financial crisis.

Makala Foley

Testimony

Haley A. Ku‘uipo Bufil Agbayani <hakbufil@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

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 with regard to Agenda **Item G.** and to ask you to reconsider discontinuing our Hard-to-Staff, SpEd, and Hawaiian Immersion pay differentials; please CONTINUE to fund these pay differentials for the 2020-2021 school year! Continue to make these differentials a priority going forward! These were promises that were made early in 2020 and something that HSTA has fought hard for to decrease teacher shortages in those areas and it worked!

In this year’s transfer period, our HSTA president shared that shortages in teachers went down 25% in Hard-to-Staff schools and SpEd teaching lines for the upcoming school year. The school that I teach at has a full SpEd department for the first time in about five years! This is a huge deal for our students and school because we now have enough bodies to work to meet the needs of our students instead of having SpEd teachers split and over-burdened with kuleana and case loads across grade levels.

I work in a Hard-to-Staff school and have been able to use the pay differential to help pay my monthly student loan debt and provide basic necessities for my family, alongside minimal purchases to help support

my classroom such as supplies, incentives, and snacks for students. I work tirelessly, often “off the clock”, to advocate and support my students and their families both academically and social-emotionally.

In the event that the Board decides to “take away” the differentials for this school year, I am afraid that the consequences will only add to the stress and uncertainty during this time of a pandemic. Many teachers depend on those differentials for many of the same reasons that I do; will some decide to retire early, will they consider leave without pay, will they have to got out and find a night job to offset the loss?? We should be working on retaining our teachers more now than ever.

Furthermore, with reopening this upcoming school and the many uncertainties associated with COVID-19, we cannot afford the possibility of losing teachers if differentials are taken away. Please, I implore you to highly reconsider this action. Please, give us hope, act with kindness, and work towards togetherness by keeping our pay differentials.

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

Gmail

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

Action item 8

Geri Fernandez <fernandezgeri@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please reconsider opening schools right now! Numbers are high for Covid 19! What will happen when teachers get sick? Who will teach kids? What will we do then? We do not feel safe right now. At least keep the first quarter with distance learning. Please keep us safe right now!

Mrs. Fernandez

Gmail

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

Testimony

Alder Olive <alderolive@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I urged you to reconsider opening public schools on August 4th. As of today, there are too many unplanned and unanswered questions that makes it unsafe for both students and teachers to enter back to school on August 4th. It is without doubt that it will be a failed attempt to return to school unless we are prepared and can reassure families of our educational offerings, plans and procedures to keep everyone safe.

Mahalo,

Alder

Please excuse any errors or typos, this message was sent from my iPhone.

Gmail

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

Do not open schools, lives are at stake

Andrew Sanchez <andrewsanchez54@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
In my tenure as a public servant, I have never seen such a lack of preparedness when dealing with an issue, as I have seen HIDOE prepare for the reopening of schools during the current pandemic. We have principals who are not adhering to our MOU, who are berating staff, and who are refusing to hear our voices! The current opening models are nowhere sufficient in protecting the health of our keiki and staff. My former district began planning last in April. I see how ill-prepared we are and it is blatantly obvious there has been zero planning! Why? This lack of planning is being balanced on the backs of teachers and that is shameful. Respect our lives! Respect our voices! Do not open schools, we are not safe.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Sancez

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Kimberly Inafuku <kiinafuku@kamaile.org> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:03 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Board of Education and Hawaii Department of Education,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

My name is Kimberly Inafuku and I am a first grade teacher at Kamaile Academy. I do not agree with what you are doing with the teacher shortage differential pay. I live in Waianae, I grew up in Waianae, and I see keiki every day that deserve a good education. I was lucky when I was a child that I could attend a private, Christian school. But as I decided to go into Education as a profession, I had a passion to help the keiki where I live, where I come from because they deserve so much better. If you take away this differential pay, you will lose these high qualified educators and the keiki here will suffer. Especially now during this Covid-19 crisis where good teachers are needed. You are forcing the schools to open early, you are forcing teachers to teach in what may be a sick environment, and you are forcing families to choose between keeping their kids at home safe with no school or sending their kids to school where they might get Covid-19. Hawaii shouldn't be a "testing" location for other states. We shouldn't be opening until we are 100% sure of are keiki's safety, teachers' safety, and families' safety.

Because of this, taking away this pay from SPED, hard to staff, and Hawaiian language programs is the worst thing you can do. It will start a domino effect that will lead to no teachers at all for our keiki. Please look elsewhere to fund your government at this time. Taking away our pay is not the answer, especially when we are in the classroom in the midst of this terrible COVID-19.

I pray and hope you will do the right thing.

Kimberly Inafuku

Kamaile Academy

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Testifying on item H

Francine Edralin <palak1ne@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please delay the opening of schools. The schools and teachers are not prepared for this task. Knowing the students at our school and their families, it would be putting them as well as their teachers/staff at risk.
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Teacher testimony

Jasmine DeCosta <jasminedecosta.berkeley@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha and Good day,
I am Jasmine "Jazze" DeCosta and I would like to introduce myself to you and offer my testimony for supporting teacher salary differentials. I am a Native Hawaiian living and working on the Big Island of Hawaii. I came to Kohala last July and have completed my first year of teaching at Kohala Middle School. I did not grow up in Hawaii and my dreams have come true living here, but I am suffering at the expense of the high cost of living and the limited salary I receive. I started my teaching career in NYC where the cost of living is high, like here in Hawaii, however, my salary was higher. Here in Hawaii I experience such beauty and vitality that is like no other, but I sometimes feel trapped on the island. It is expensive to travel during the holiday times and to travel abroad has a high cost. I find joy in traveling and exploring the world. I am a science teacher and I want to excite my students to learn more about the world they live in. Having limited resources to contribute towards my self care of traveling is one impact of my low salary that the teacher salary differentials can aim to solve.
In 2018 my body underwent major transformations when I survived a major accident. As a result I am constantly under the care of medical professionals, these extra out of pocket expenses are impacting my budget and vitality as an educator. I request the BOE continue the salary differentials to support Native Hawaiian teachers like myself who have returned to Hawaii to connect with Native Hawaiian keiki.

Mahalo nui for your time.

Jasmine "Jazze" DeCosta

--
Earth Science Educator

Gmail

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

Testimony

Teacher <creader13@hotmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:08 PM

Aloha Board of Education

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

The HIDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online environment.

I work at Princess Nahienaena Elementary School in Maui. I have 3 of my own children who attend Princess Nahienaena Elementary, and Kihei Public Charter School. I feel that there are so many issues that have yet to be addressed as far as safely returning to school.

I am worried about the safety of my preschool special education students as well as the myself the the staff working in my classroom. Students at this developmental level cannot safely wear masks during the bulk of the school day. These students also need close adult prompting and supervision, making 6 feet of social distancing impossible and unsafe at times. How can we all stay safe in this environment?

What are the alternatives for students who can not social distance (due to disability and developmental level) and cannot wear a mask? Do these children stay home for distance learning? How can I feel comfortable providing appropriate distance education for my students when I have not been trained and I am required to also teach full time?

In addition, I have a child of my own, who will not be in school every other week. I am entitled for leave to supervise my child when he is not in school. Will be substitute teacher be responsible to teach full time and provide distance education on the days i am on leave? Are there options for telework?

Lastly, as a parent and a long time educator within the HI DOE, I do not have confidence that my own children will be able to return safely to school Aug 4. If I could afford to keep my children at home and pay for a quality online curriculum, that is what I would do. I do not have confidence of my own children's physical safety or confidence in the quality of education offered by the HI DOE at this point in time.

Please delay the opening of school so teachers and administrators have time to prepare to keep our community safe during this global pandemic.

Thank you

Carla Hazlet
Preschool Special Education Teacher
Princess Nahienaena Elementary School
Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii

Gmail

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

Testimony

Alison Higa <alisonchiga@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Kari Stagno <kari.stagno@gmail.com>, Sheri Yoshikawa <dustirose01@gmail.com>, "Tommie T." <tmt0340@gmail.com>

My name is Alison Yee and I'm a 5th grade teacher at Lehua Elementary school. I am

Testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

I firmly feel that the DOE and my school is not ready to reopen and many procedures to keep us safe are not in place yet. I have a 6 month old baby at home and elderly parents that cannot get sick. Teachers, staff, students, and families need to feel safe first and foremost. Yes, let's start school but let's start when it's safe and safety measures and procedures are in place. Let's prepare properly, especially for the safety of all.

The health and safety of our keiki and the staff of our public schools must be paramount in any decision-making. We must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus. This is a process we cannot afford to rush.

Gmail

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

Testimony

Ben Duke <duke@whea.net> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Ben Duke
WHEA PCS

Dear BOE:

I absolutely understand what a difficult time we are all in. These past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted the state's overall revenue and budget. There is hope though that the Heroes Act will pass making emergency supplemental appropriations available to Hawaii: We would receive $303 million in education funding if the Senate passed the HEROES Act. The K-12 portion of these funds would provide Hawaii $197 million.

New figures prove that for those schools that got differentials--it worked! Please do not get rid of a program that actually has a positive effect on our education and our most precious commodity, our children. The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in very important shortage areas.The number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent.

Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations.

Again, I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students.

Even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. Slashing educators' pay will be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread. If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system.

Thank you for your time and previous support but please have it in your heart to continue the differentials.

Ben Duke

Gmail

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

Differentials and compression testimony

Celia Frost <celiafrost@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:11 PM

Hello, my name is Celia Frost and I have worked for the Hawai'i DOE since 2008 - just before the recession. Currently, I teach at Pa'auilo School on the Big Island, which has been recognized as hard to staff because of our distance from a larger population.

I would benefit from compression resolution partially because my colleagues who have put their time and energy into Hawai'i Public Schools will be financially recognized and more able to continue employment with the DOE, which will leave fewer holes in our staff. Personally, my steps had an extended period of stagnancy due to the recession and lack of contract; I am in the large cohort considered to be "compressed." This impacted me financially at a time when need escalated due to the cost of living and my family's life stage. It seems unfair to me in the first place that my 5 years of teaching before moving to Hawai'i were not considered in my initial placement on the steps. Adding to that, it seems unfair that recent hires with many fewer years are compensated at the same rate as I am. This is not only about *right now*. My State of Hawai'i retirement pension and my Social Security benefits are calculated based on my average income during my working years. Compression is going to have long-term effects on my finances for the rest of my life if it is not resolved equitably.

Funding teacher salaries and eliminating artificial compression will benefit Hawai'i schools by keeping highly qualified teachers coming into the profession, supporting students by providing stable, professional, well-educated teachers, and it will benefit the teachers themselves by rewarding their seeking continuing education, their hard work, and their dedication with a living wage that enables them to live in the communities in which they teach.

Sincerely,
Celia Frost
Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate School
Hawai'i Island

Gmail

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

Testimony

Shannon Jacob Kline <shannon.jacob_kline@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing concerning Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

I have several concerns about the scheduled student return to school date of August 4. Many of my questions regarding preparedness for distance learning and student and staff safety have gone unanswered by my administration and the BOE. As of now, I haven't been made aware of any protocols for families opting in to 100 percent distance learning, what happens when a member of a student's family or a student or teacher tests positive for COVID, what are the protocols for physical distancing in general, and where and when will training opportunities be provided for teachers should school need to go completely virtual.

WIthout guidelines for these and other pressing concerns being fully laid out, it seems irresponsible to expect students to return safely to school in a mere two weeks time and untenable for teachers to effectively provide instruction equitable to all students. Please consider delaying the student return date until a plan that completely addresses these and other important questions is completed and provided to all Hawai‘i's schools.

Regards,
Shannon Jacob Kline
National Board Certified
English Teacher
Konawaena High School

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Testimony

Joy <joyjoy.808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The following is a testimony regarding the **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

My name is Joy Okano and I am an English teacher at Moanalua High School. I am also a parent whose child attends Moanalua Elementary School. I also have a 4-month old infant who will be cared for while I'm at work by my parents who are elderly at 79 and 83 years old with underlying health conditions. Not one person either me, my family, or other teachers and students can afford to contract the virus because of insufficient planning, specificity, and a need to rush the opening of schools. It is completely unacceptable to allow risking students' and faculty's lives when schools are essentially not ready because no one knows definitive answers about many issues concerning health and wellness, in which the BOE has not clarified.

I am writing to implore the BOE to not open schools on the August 4th date. We are not ready to open campuses because the BOE has not clearly answered nor defined many questions and issues all schools face listed below:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HIDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Specific guidelines need to be addressed for all of these questions, and more PD and direction is necessary prior to students appearing on campus. We all did not receive mandatory PD training regarding distance learning. It was voluntary and many teachers were unaware or were away during these PDs. For the superintendent to make a blanket statement that all teachers were given PD throughout the summer is completely false. It's utterly reprehensible!

Sincerely,
Joy Okano

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

skiesandtrees <skiesandtrees@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

WE NEED MORE TO PREPARE FOR THE HEALTH OF ALL INVOLVED IN EACH SCHOOL IN OUR STATE AND THE FAMILIES CONNECTED TO THEM.

KRISTEN GOODWIN

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Gmail

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

Please Keep the Differentials

Danielle Moss <dani.moss@aes.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Danielle Moss and I am a first-year SPED teacher at Aliʻiolani Elementary School in Honolulu. I am emailing to urge that you consider keeping the differentials for thousands of teachers just like me.
I majored in Special Education in college and so my heart and professional life are dedicated to giving our most vulnerable Keiki the educational opportunities that they deserve. Please reconsider your decision to postpone the differentials because our Keiki deserve more teachers that are specialized in giving them the accommodations, modifications, interventions, and direct/individual instruction that they need to help them succeed.
This is such a fragile time for all of our students, their families, and teachers and revoking this differential will cause major hardships in our communities. Having more teachers in the Special Education profession is an asset to our school communities and so we need to make sure to retain them, which the differential has proven to do.
Please consider all of the people's lives that you are affecting when you make this decision. This choice not only affects thousands of teachers but also all the Keiki and families that are better supported by increased teachers in hard-to-staff positions.
Thank you so much for your consideration of my perspective,
Danielle Moss

Testimony

Haley van Noord <alohahaley@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:22 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha board members,

My name is Haley van Weemen van Noord and I am a ten year veteran 7th grade Life Science teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School on Maui. Ten years is almost a record at our school which is expected to have 7+ new hires this year. This is the first time in my career I'm considering leaving education and leaving Hawaii.

I've endured pay cuts and furloughs. I've practiced active shooter drills and lockdowns. I would do anything to protect my students...but I can't protect them from the school year ahead.

Going back to school in person is so reckless and so dangerous I cannot believe the DOE claims to have our students best interests in mind. Our schools are not equipped to deal with the demands this virus imposes! The cleaning requirements alone are more than school custodians can handle, especially when most of time our paper towel and soap dispensers are left unfilled. And dropping this in the laps of principals and school committees to figure out is simply unacceptable.

The only way to keep our students, their families and our school staff safe is to make sure that campuses stay closed and that students have access to 100% virtual learning. This should NOT to be compared what happened in the 4th quarter of last school year...when "enrichment" was assigned and students were told that they would not be held accountable.

Please consider all the business that is still being conducted virtually and the community spread that is already happening throughout the islands and contemplate, are you really protecting our keiki, their families and school staff members by asking them to convene in groups (in person) bigger than you yourselves are currently meeting in?

Lastly, HAWAII SCHOOL CAMPUS ARE NOT READY TO REOPEN. Please do not take what Superintendent Kishimoto is reporting as truth for all schools. I know that teachers on my campus HAVE NOT received any professional development over the last four months unless we have sought it out ourselves. I know the summer school teachers on our campus DO NOT FEEL SAFE and the protocols to protect them are not present. Please push back the reopening until school administrators are ready to safely open or allow us a 100% distance learning option so we know we can keep students, their families, staff and teachers safe.

I ask you to help protect Hawaii schools in this scary and uncertain time. It is our kuleana to provide the best we can for our students. The only safe option is to keep campuses closed and deliver quality education 100% online.

Respectfully,

Haley van Weemen van Noord, MS, NBCT

Gmail

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

School

Diane Tam <dianet6555@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Opening
I'm absolutely opposed to opening schools on August 4th. I'm definitely sure that my grandson won't be safe against Covid-19 at the school. No matter how much you say that schools must open, it can't and shouldn't be at the sake of our children! There are too many ifs and maybes! Please reconsider for the sake of Hawaii families!
Thank you,
Diane Delos Santos

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony: Delay reopening of schools PLEASE

Misty Inouye <mistyinouye@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov, Misty Inouye <mistyinouye@gmail.com>, Scott Inouye <inouyeelectric@gmail.com>

Aloha Board Members,

As a parent of a 7th grader at Waiakea Intermediate School and a senior at Waiakea High School and am begging you to delay the opening of school. So many questions are unanswered and I feel like my children will be guinea pigs along with their teachers. Please, please continue to preserve the low numbers that Hawai'i is now experiencing. Opening schools will be a mistake and I hope the BOE is prepared to shoulder the blame if our COVID numbers increase.

Mahalo,
Misty Inouye
mistyinouye@gmail.com
(808) 960-2266

Gmail

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

Testimony

Anthony Martinez <kalehuawehe808@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:23 PM
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Please reconsider a delay of the students return to school. Our islands have not recovered yet from the COVID spike.

Na'u,
Tony Martinez
Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Opening of schools in Hawai'i-please postpone

Nicole Bergh <nicole.bergh@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it May Concern:
I am writing this message to you to consider postponing the opening of schools here in Hawai'i. We have not had the training... We need more time, answers to the questions we have, and protection. Please give us time and answer the questions we have.

I moved from MN last year and took a $16,000 pay cut; been in the field for 19 years. I make $1200 per paycheck... You can't live on this! Please consider keeping the differential.

Thank you!

Nikki

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

Sarah Risser <srissy89@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:23 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

To Whom This Concerns,

My name is Sarah Risser, and I am a teacher of 9 years, 5 of which have been in Maui. I am writing this email to vehemently oppose the proposal to transfer differentials that have already been promised to teachers.

As teachers, our job is to not only teach academics, but to also instill a strong sense of character in our youngest citizens. We do this by leading by example.

Your job, as our community leaders, should first and foremost be to protect our most vulnerable, our children. Shame on you for even suggesting this proposal.

Should this proposal go through, it will initially significantly impact teachers, many of whom have already made financial plans based on the meaningless promises you made. But of course the burden will ultimately fall on our keiki. Studies have shown that these differentials make an immensely positive impact on the students effected by them. So I have to assume, based on your proposal, that you do not care about children succeeding within our public school system.

I urge you to reconsider the great power you yield, and the great responsibility that comes with it. When you took on this role, did you imagine yourself fighting for the good of others or was it power that lured you into public service? What would your younger self think of your choices?

Do the right thing and keep the differentials where they have been promised to be.

Sincerely,
Sarah Risser

First Grade Teacher
Srissy89@gmail.com

Gmail

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

Safety measures in school

Nawahine Kuraoka <nawahinekuraoka@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:24 PM
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

What's the likely hood of sending our children back to school if they are not safe due to the corona virus and the increase of the virus fluctuating daily across the state of Hawai'i? Who will keep the teachers and students safe and their families? NO one is prepared to return to school. So use your head and think about it!!! What will it take for BOE to realize HAWAII IS NOT READY FOR SCHOOL YET!!! We know what will happen when the kids go back to school….realize this is a pandemic of a dangerous virus called COVID19….!!!

ALOHA STARTS WITH THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE IN HAWAI'I, WHERE IS THE ALOHA FOR OUR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SAFETY GOING BACK TO SCHOOL? ONLINE LEARNING WILL HAVE TO BE THE ONLY WAY TO DO UNTIL THE VIRUS IS CONTAINED AND IMMUNIZATION IS AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. LIKE WAR….WE NEED TO PREPARE FOR THIS VIRUS WAR THAT IS AFFECTING THE WORLD… AFFECTING HAWAII…AFFECTING OUR OHANA! I THINK PARENTS WOULD RATHER BE HEALTHY AND ALIVE THAN DEAD! PRIORITY FOR OUR CHILDRENS SAFETY IS #1!

TWO WEEKS IS TOO LATE FOR YOU TO DECIDE IT'S OKAY TO RETURN TO SCHOOL. YOU HAVE FAMILY..YOU MUST DECIDE CORRECTLY!

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Gmail

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

Testimony-teacher differentials

Anthony Martinez <mrmartinezteaches@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Please find the teacher differentials. Please also consider that the teacher differentials are never at risk due to funding issues.

Me ka haahaa,
Tony Martinez
Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Jacob Cassens <mistercassens@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

As a teacher who speaks with and collaborates with teachers from around the world, I have found that the only thing Hawaii has been on time with was the closing of schools in the first place in March.

After that, confusing directives were given regarding when and how we were to connect with students, and a large part of that is based on the fact that the state, the BOE, the DOE, and many of our administrators are so far removed from the technological realities of today's world.

We were told that our principals have a lot of leeway to decide what happens at their schools, but that should not be the case until we have strong, basic guidelines in place.

There should not be exceptions to the 6 foot rule. We are not receiving complete PPE adequate for engaging in day-long interaction with students, and we are being staged in a small room with 4 or more other teachers. The teachers in Arizona who contracted the virus were doing everything properly, yet even with no students they all got sick, and one of them died.

We have asked for mandatory temperature checks for students, and we have been told that they will handle cases on a case-by-case basis. That is NO way to handle a seriously contagious virus. We need protocols in place to accommodate these situations, ready to go.

Better yet, think about this: If we have to have protocols in place to return to school for WHEN an outbreak occurs, we should not be going back at all.

We have heard repeatedly that students need to connect with their teachers in person, but I and most others will be wearing at least two masks, visors, face masks, and/or goggles, gloves, and a disposable suit over my clothes if I can get them. Then I have to worry about bringing something back to my family at home.

Distance learning is not ideal. No one is arguing against that. Not a single teacher thinks online learning replaces distance learning. We are arguing that the risk of exposure a student might face just to see a fully suited up, masked, stranger while being forced to stay six feet away from their friends in a closed classroom all day is the worse option than letting the kids engage with their teachers online, where they can also engage with their peers, do group work and activities, still laugh and play while learning, and engage the content in the best way we can provide for them.

Even though our governor has demonstrated his lack of knowledge of social media, particularly Twitter, and even though many older teachers feel left out when dealing with education, it is our job to learn and adapt to the needs of the people around us while doing our best to protect them.

Teachers are afraid to speak up in a lot of cases because this state has a toxic culture in their education system of attacking people for breaking the line, but in private conversations, and in private groups, and when talking with families and parents and doctors, we are speaking about how this is scary, it's wrong, and we don't want to see people get hurt or die when there is an option that won't risk that.

I thought government corruption was bad in Las Vegas, but this place takes the cake. Stop dealing with your thug bosses and remember who you're here to serve and protect - the people. People of low SES, people of color, and people who, without your intervention, might yet become the next victims of a poorly handled political debacle that shouldn't have even reached these islands. Those are who you need to protect. Those who need help protecting themselves.

Households in Hawaii are almost all multi-generational, non-nuclear households. This lack of safety is concerning.

Just this weekend, while driving around the island, safe in my car, I saw a FULL wedding at North Shore, large gatherings of people camping, having cookouts and more at Kaena Point, both sides, and I saw groups of 20 or more in the water and on the beach no fewer than 9 times. I gave up counting.

You want to keep social distancing requirements in place for students whose families are not practicing them at home, and those families will in turn endanger more students in school. Who is holding whom accountable?

What do we do when we get sick with COVID? What about if we have medical conditions that make us more at risk of exposure or more susceptible to permanent illness once we catch it? You are not making clear decisions in regard to our safety. Let's talk about the kids.

Kids don't fully grasp the concepts of mortality. Yet. But you put them in a room and they have to watch as their friends get sick or their family members get sick and die, then they will understand it, and they will bear permanent emotional scars.

The Flu of 1918 killed, by best estimates, around 675,000 people in the US in 1918. In modern times, we should have been able to avoid any drastic spike, but we've already lost 143,000 in the US in 2020. 100 years later and we see our numbers climbing in a frighteningly similar fashion. Our current political climate, and the public's general lack of agreement to abide by the mandates is a huge part of this that needs to be taken into account.

I have seen people not wearing masks in public, not wearing masks properly, refusing to wear masks outright, and until you can get all of those people in check, those people's children are going to be going to our schools, and spreading whatever their families catch by not following orders as well.

So you have some choices - you can't control how those other people act or make them wear their masks (enforcement on the island has been almost nonexistent), you can't fix the stupid. But you can help keep the innocent safe, the kids, and protect those of us who fight for these kids every day of our lives. If you think it's hard finding teachers right now, try it with the pay cuts coming and with people retiring and quitting when one of their peers dies.

Please be responsible and listen to the Teacher's Union. Listen to us, who are in the classrooms every day, on the frontlines. We shouldn't have to risk our lives needlessly, to have to update our will, to buy our own protective equipment, when most of us already barely get by. It's not just unkind, it's cruel to do that and expect any kind of quality engagement from us.

Let us work with them online, make it the best we can. Because in my classroom, they're going to be watching videos of me and working by themselves on a computer anyway. Why risk it for that? What's the point? I'm not touching them, I'm staying six feet away from them, and I'm going to still be forced to work in a cramped office with 4 other people. My life is already at risk in that case. I can work from home without a mask, and I would, we did from March to June.

Until then, if you reopen the schools, you should all, including the governor, go sit in those classrooms with those kids every day. Watch how hard it is to maintain social distancing. Watch how kids behave in those situations, and how much they love being forced to sit by themselves and work in isolation while the companionship of their friends and the comfort of their teacher is right there, but completely out of reach.

Please make the right choice. Don't send kids back to in-class instruction until we have a vaccine and/or no new cases for 14 days. And not Trump's 14 days. Real data 14 days.

Thank you.

Jacob Cassens

Gmail

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

Testimony

Auika Muragin <a.muragin8@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
My name is Chardene Auika Metcalfe. I am an educator who works on the island of Kauai at Wilcox Elementary School. I am here testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Since Covid, I believe the HIDOE has not done their part to help teachers do our job. We had to learn, in 2 weeks, how to deliver ALL instruction online. We finally made it through to the end of the year and did all we could to maintain some sort of consistency. Again, with little to no support.

Here we are, at the beginning of a new year, with once again little to no understanding on protocol, instruction, health & safety.

I do not believe important questions have been answered, and yet we are being forced to open our doors. How are teachers expected to go back to work next week when we are not prepared? The "we'll just figure it out as we go" mentality is terrible and needs to be fixed before students come back to school.

We need answers. We need it clearly written. We need it done before students come back to school.

Our lives and the lives of our students are too important to rush.

Auika Metcalfe
ELL Coordinator
Wilcox Elementary School

Gmail

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

Testimony

Roy Hannu <roy.hannu@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

My name is Roy Hannu and I am a teacher at Mililani High School. My son will be in 1st grade everyday at Mililani Waena Elementary School. For the safety of our communities and our families, we really need to wait on the opening of schools at this time. I feel that it is just a matter of time until a student or teacher will test positive for Covid-19. We need to know what the plan will be when a student of staff tests positive? What about families that are traveling and not quarantining? Please, do not rush this decision. Make it safe. We interact with all aspects of the community.

Thank you,

Roy Hannu

Gmail

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

Testimony

robin White <robinmargot@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a Special Education Teacher at Kihei Charter School in Kihei, Maui. I am writing today for the support of the SPED differential and the Immersion Teacher differential pay. It is Action Item G on the upcoming agenda.

I switched over from general education to Special Education in January of 2020. I started receiving the differential pay on April 1st when my Praxis was complete. It made a big difference in my household. I support 2 children, one in high school and one in college. The differential pay enables me to be able to pay my bills; without this pay I go a little into debt each month.

The first thing I noticed about special education is that it is more involved than it looks. You do have to be aware of a lot of laws to do this job. The IEP meetings you have a big responsibility and crafting an IEP sometimes takes several hours. During COVID, I worked more hours each day than if I were in school. I spent evenings and weekends catching up to get ready for meetings. Special Education students count on us to support their skills in reading and math or they will not progress.

I now know one thing. If I did not have the differential pay - perhaps I would not be willing to do this job.

The second part of this letter is for the Immersion teachers. Both my daughters attended Kula Kaiapuni Immersion school for both of their school careers. My youngest daughter will graduate from immersion at King Kekaulike this coming year. There have been many times along the way that was a shortage of teachers for Hawaiian students. At times they turned away students from the program because they did not have the resources and the teachers. I feel for those children that they lost the education they were entitled to receive. These past 2 years there was a shortage at the high school. My daughter had a class where they did nothing. They had a substitute and they just watched movies and were graded on 5 little assignments all quarter because the teacher could not teach in Hawaiian.

PLEASE-PLEASE VOTE to fund the differential pay to these teachers, It is for the children, they will be the winners or losers in this scenario.

Gmail

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

Delay Reopening on August 4, 2020

Starr Asselin <sbeaner57@icloud.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawai'i BOE,

I urge you to reconsider the reopening of Hawai'i's public schools on August 4, 2020. As a veteran in the classroom and a person nearing retirement, I am not comfortable returning to the classroom at this time because there are many unanswered questions regarding the health and safety of myself, my students, families, and my community. The DOE has given us a MOU without providing the very important details of how this will look in our schools. I appreciate the effort to get our students back in classrooms, but at what expense. Please delay the student start date allowing the DOE, schools and staff adequate planning and training time to accommodate the myriad of changes that need to be solidly in place before attempting a comeback that could have dire circumstances if rushed through. Let's work together to create a safe, clear, viable plan to move forward. I feel strongly that our state has more serious work to do before we are prepared to accept the liabilities and possible consequences of acting before we are fully prepared to do so. Please delay the student start date at this time. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Starr Asselin
Waikōloa Elementary and Middle School
Waikoloa, Hawaii

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

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

Testimony

Terrius Harris <terrius.harris.19@tfacorps.org> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As I think about returning to school, even with all of the precautions taken, I believe that this hasty decision to return to an in-class setting is not only detrimental to students' and teachers' health alike, but also the educational integrity of the curriculum we are expected to enforce. By returning to an in-class format of teaching, the state is turning a blind eye to the immediate health risks that each teacher and student will face. This can be best recognized as other states such as California and Florida, who opened their states back up to stimulate the economy are now shutting down yet again. Even more noticeable, we can see the same thing happening in Hawaii since businesses started to reopen while numbers continue to rise again, and even in those cases the state is enforcing and introducing a policy with a minimal impact. Although I do not have much say pertaining to those matters, the schools reopening and continuing with in-class instruction is something that directly impacts me and my students. In the oath each of you made, you swore to make decisions for the betterment of education statewide, but by making this decision you have done just the opposite. Do not allow our Keiki to be put in danger, and do not allow our teachers to sacrifice more than we have too already. Though I recognize the valiant efforts of the schools and state, we are not ready, and will not be ready until we have answers to all questions and concerns regarding the decision to return to school. With that said, I ask what many teachers have asked before but yet to receive a defying answer, If I, any of my co-workers or students are to contract COVID-19 due to your reckless decision to rush this return to school process and die, will you care and will you take responsibility? A question for each and every member of the BOE, as you are not in the classrooms thus you are not at the same risk. Thank you for your time, and I hope you make the right decision for the betterment of all of us.

Terrius Harris
James Campbell High School

Gmail

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

Testimony

tasha compos <tcompos@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 12:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am writing testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Tasha Compos and I teach 7th-grade English Language Arts at Kihei Charter School. In addition, my son is a 10th grader at Kihei Charter school, so I write as a parent as well. I am very anxious to get back to school and teaching in-person, as I fully believe it is best for our kids. There is nothing I want more than to be welcoming kids back to school! However, I feel that safety must be the first priority when it comes to our decision-making. I am concerned that we have not made every precaution necessary before students are brought back to campus on our August 3rd start date.

Personally, I do feel fully prepared to teach online, so I am not as concerned with training for distance learning as some teachers may be. I do however have concerns about providing adequate social distancing and safety on campus. When I am in the classroom I feel responsible for the well-being of my students and right now I don't know what that looks like, will I be able to keep kids safe? Or my son? Or myself?

I feel that more time is needed to make educators and parents feel comfortable with the reopening plans and for school administrations to fully "flush out" their plans for schedules and policies. As we are just days away for coming back to the classroom I truly hope that we don't make decisions we regret, lives are at stake.

Mahalo for your time,

Tasha Compos

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ann Crawford <acrawford@kkhs.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:59 AM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Testimony on the reopening of schools

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Anna Crawford. I have taught at King Kekaulike High, Maui for the last 17 years. We recently decided to go all virtual, except for those needing extra assistance, because even with rotating schedules we cannot safely socially distance students. I can only safely fit 7 students in my portable and I have 170 students. I am happy that the leadership at my school made this decision. However I am in no way prepared to deliver 4 levels of French virtually. I have not received any training on how to teach virtually, we have been on summer break. I do not consider myself not to be tech savvy and I have very outdated equipment so the learning cure for me will be steep. There are only a few hours in our schedule for the first 2 weeks that are devoted to professional development. I feel that by delaying students' return to school teachers would have more time to be trained and then to prepare and deliver quality learning opportunities for students. I want to do a good job and not have to figure it out on the fly. Our students deserve quality instruction. I am the head HSTA representative at my school and all the teachers I talk to do not feel prepared to start the school year. We only found out Monday that we would be all virtual.

Another point I would like to make is that the survey Superintendent Kishimoto keeps referring to was taken at the end of 4th quarter. At that time, COVID-19 numbers were very low in Hawaii and had flattened. Since that time, our numbers have gotten worse and many other states are spiking. I believe if that same survey was taken today the numbers would be different. More families would want virtual learning and to delay the start of school so that schools and teachers can be better prepared.

Thank you for considering my testimony

Anna Crawford

--
Anna Crawford

French and Advisory Teacher, Kekaulike High
Head Faculty Rep, Hawaii State Teachers Association
KKHS FIDM Fashion Club Advisor

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protection.
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Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Regarding schools reopening

Nanda Navis <nnavis@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 1:06 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha e Chairperson Payne and the members of the Board of Education,

My name is Nanda Freeman and today I write you in regards to the decision to move forward with opening school on August 4. For context, my husband is a DOE teacher and I am an employee at a private school on island.

I have seen private schools spending the summer preparing their facilities and teachers for starting back at school, building and sharing contingency plans and working with teachers to develop practical solutions to problems that may be experienced in these tenuous times.

My husband has received none of this guidance and he has attended every optional meeting available for him this summer. He is being told that his 7th graders will be sitting in class, they cannot move around, they will not be speaking to each other and there will be no collaboration. Anyone who has or knows any 7th graders knows this will be near impossible.

My recommendation is that schools instead take time in early August to educate students and families on technology usage and the school applications. Then move to a 100% online platform. Yes, this is difficult for families who need child care, but at most in my husbands complex, students will only be on campus one day a week anyways. Would it not be better to keep everyone safe?

Some people will say that students will not attend and point to data from last year. The reality is, if you tell a student that their grades will not change and the work they do will not be graded, of course students check out. I saw infinitely more participation in the private sector where grades still mattered and teachers and counselors were actively following up with students missing class. For those families without access to Internet, it would be very smart to work with spectrum and hawaii telecom or even large phone companies to get hotspots to those students who need the added accessibility to technology. In complexes where the majority of students do not have access to wifi, teachers can work with packets or weekly projects.

This is not a time to sacrifice keiki and teachers. You may view it as separate from your bubble, but so many children live with kupuna or parents who are also going to work. All of these people will be exposed. Our resources as a state will be diminished: tracking cases, monitoring progress, hospital bed availability, and even further stress on our emergency systems.

This is an unnecessary risk. If teachers are going back to the classroom, they must be aware of their options. They need to know what the classroom prep should be, have access to good resources on distance learning, how to recognize symptoms, make sure that all of the required PPE is available, etc.

I urge you to think of health and safety right now. This is a large chunk of the population who will otherwise be out at risk in a manner where they are incredibly unprepared.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Nanda Freeman

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening up public schools

Mike Hikalea <hale1953.mh@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 1:43 PM
To: BOE.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I refuse to accept this act of stupidity by our public officials to open our schools.
I ask that suspend your opening date.
And utilize learning from a distance,
until we have a clear and accurate plan for the keiki your staff and everyone who's lives you will be jeopardizing.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Delaying School Opening

kristiauyong@yahoo.com <kristiauyong@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 3:23 PM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Kristi Auyong and I am a teacher at Mckinley High School who teaches art. I am also the primary caretaker of an elderly family member. I have been working in the DOE for the past 2 years and really enjoy teaching my students, but I am concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on August 4

The current state plan does not ensure the safe return for students and jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. Below are my concerns:

-Training for distance learning and technology given to teachers with 3 weeks notice during normal school year: During the pandemic, many teachers including myself spent hours trying to learn by ourselves how to teach our students effectively. I spent over 20 hours after Spring Break learning about Google Classroom, Webex, and more to help engage my students. I have attended multiple trainings to help me become a better teacher, but there was very little support during the first two weeks after Spring Break. A better plan and system must be in place internally and externally to handle a crisis like this.

-Lack of consistent communication between schools, local news, HSTA, and the DOE: Because plans changed daily, it was difficult for schools to help parents and students understand what is expected of them. At times, our only consistent source of information was the news instead of internally. The language used in media interviews is very difficult for families and students that speak a different language to understand. The many discrepancies in the media, school communication and DOE communication causes a lot of confusion for students, families, and communities to understand what is being said. A streamlined document from the DOE stating all these procedures explicitly and in different languages is needed moving forward to serve the community.

-Concerns for cleaning: There is a shortage of disinfectant products that will help protect teachers and students in the classroom. Many classrooms do not have sinks available to make hand washing a viable solution at all times. Other concerns include the monitoring of students socially distancing in hallways and bathrooms, disinfecting between secondary and elementary classroom passing times, and the resupply of cleaning products in classrooms and bathroomson frequently.

There has not been an explicit procedures by the DOE on how all schools will handle this which is another safety concern. It has only been addressed that teachers should not need to clean, but there is little direction on how will surfaces will be cleaned to avoid cross contamination and the spread of Coronavirus.

I am in support of pushing back reopening school because of these concerns and lack of clear procedures to help teachers and schools navigate this difficult time.

I propose that the DOE considers having distance learning for students during first quarter and then a blended model if there are no active coronavirus cases for 4 weeks. The extra time in pushing back reopening schools on a blended model allows the DOE to improve existing guidelines to be more specific. It also gives time for the other unions to speak with their meinbers to allow them to voice the concerns. All these collective feedback is needed to help move the DOE forward to a better model than what it currently exists now

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and best wishes to you and your families during this difficult time.

Sincerely,
Kristi Auyong

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Testimony BOE

From: Cynthia Levy <cwlevy67@gmail.com> on behalf of Cynthia Levy
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Cynthia W. Levy and a Special Education Teacher at Salt Lake Elementary School. I sharing my concerns about opening the schools on Aug. 4th. The schools in the state of Hawaii are not ready to open due to the pandemic. Schools are not ready to open due to the safety of our students, teacher, and staff. The superintendent has stated that teachers have received training to accommodate our students is not true. All teachers have not received training to accommodate our students and teachers. The teachers and parents are asking for guidance. I also have a child that will be staying home for distance learning due to having surgery during the summer. We just need to slow down and make sure the teachers know what to do .
Teachers need to be trained for distance learning teaching. As an educator and parent, our schools are not ready to receive students in the classroom. My daughter is a senior this year and she is afraid to return to the campus. Please think of the students, teachers, and staff, before we open our schools. The health and safety of our Keiki and the staff of our public schools must be paramount in any decision-making. We must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus. We cannot afford to rush to open our schools.

Blessings,
Cynthia W. Levy
--

Focus Expect and Receive in 2020

Cynthia Levy
Special Education Teacher
Salt Lake Elementary School
(808) 305-1600

Testimony BOE

From: Sonya Porcher <porcher1005@gmail.com> on behalf of Sonya Porcher
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to Support the Delay of Opening Schools

Dear Board of Education,

I submit my testimony to delay the opening of schools due to the lack of directions regarding safety precautions provided by the Board of Education for our students and teachers. As I listened to Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto provide their stance on opening schools on August 4th, I feel that administrators, parents, students and teachers are not ready. There are many questions that have not been addressed such as are masks required by all students and staff on campus? If a child is not able to afford masks daily, will the school provide them? What if a parent refuses to have their child wear a mask or protective covering? (Are there any consequences?) How do we maintain 6 feet distance with movement throughout the day (fire drills and recess)?

In terms of daily operations, will students be spaced six feet apart on the bus prior to arrival to school? Will the students' temperature be checked prior to arrival to school? When does the education bubble begin (prior to the departing a crowded bus or after sitting in a crowded cafeteria in the morning for breakfast or a library holding before going to class)?

It appears that schools will open with a trial by fire approach while risking the health and safety of many older and more vulnerable teachers. With a current teacher shortage in Hawaii, can the school system afford to risk the health of their employees? Can the State of Hawaii manage a possible outbreak like Florida, New York, Arizona, Texas or California?

As a teacher of 26 years, this is the first time in my teaching career that I do not feel safe with returning to school. I am an educator because I can have a certain amount of control over the environment that I create for my students. I am not a licensed medical professional or epidemiologist. I cannot predict nor determine if my classroom has been sanitized to the degree that COVID-19 is not present nor if a child or myself is asymptomatic and I am putting others at risk.

Until we can answer these questions, I do not feel that I am ready to return to the classroom. If I have a voice in my own life-existence as an educator in the state of Hawaii, I am voicing that we delay the opening of schools until these uncertainties are addressed. I would prefer to be writing lesson plans than my last will and testament. Time is needed to properly have an understanding of how health and safety will be implemented as well as providing the necessary communications to parents.

Kind regards

Sonya Porcher

Testimony BOE

From: Robyn Skudlarek <robynskudlarek@gmail.com> on behalf of Robyn Skudlarek
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE members,
Thank you for your service to the keiki and school communities in Hawaii. I write to you today with increasing anxiety about the reopening of schools scheduled to occur for teachers (next week) and for students, in two weeks. I would like to give my mana'o about the following:

Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Beyond getting sick myself (which is a huge fear), my primary concerns are as follows:

1) Why are we rushing back to school and bringing kids back to classrooms and campuses, without having addressed everything already in the MIU and without recognizing that the campuses and the teachers ARE NOT READY TO RECEIVE STUDENTS because most of us are on summer break. Let's say we bring kids back to school without the teachers having had the time to prepare for their arrival - and then we have mass outbreaks? And tourism is starting again! What then? What is the plan? And if we have to shut down again, when will the teachers have been trained for full online delivery of education? Why not do that now? Prior to bringing kids back to school? Also, what are the procedures / the decision tree about when we would have to go back to full distance learning?

2) How are principals addressing the social and emotional needs of the teachers and other adults in the school community? When and how will they be able to gather together, to process the collective trauma we have all experienced as a state, a nation, and a world? National social-emotional learning organizations are emphatic that we must have our eyes on this aspect of our collective wellness. We need time for this and there is no way this will happen in most schools on those two weeks of half days.

3) We now know that kids over 10 infect others at similar rates as that of adults. This is new information, coming out in the last week. With the possible exception of elementary schools, schools are set up to be petri dishes for infection. And most of our kids live in multi-generational homes, amping up the possibility for spread.

4) The DOE has stated that athletics are starting in a couple weeks! How can this be possible? How does that promote virus containment?

5) What about sick leave if teachers get sick with Covid? What if we run out of sick days?

6) Where are the plastic screens that we see at stores and in other parts of the world that protect kids from each other, and from kids to teachers and vice versa? The technology is basic and could be used but I haven't heard of any such plans to put these screens up.

7) What about testing? I see nothing about testing every teacher which should be mandatory. It is unthinkable that teachers are not going to be offered testing.

8) Our cases in Hawaii are on the rise and have been so for over two weeks. **We need to go back to when our Superintendent said if there are no live cases in the state for four weeks, we can start reopening schools.**

We are in an unprecedented times! We must take the time to get things right. A gradual approach is what is clearly called for at this time. Please delay the return of students to school until we have those four weeks of no live cases, or at least four weeks of decreasing cases where our infection rate stays under the CDC goals for safety - and use that time to let teachers start work on the planning end of things.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Robyn Skudlarek
Resource Teacher - West Hawaii School District

Testimony BOE

From: Deborah Richard <deb67farm@gmail.com> on behalf of Deborah Richard
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a 30 year doe state of Hawaii teacher. My school has never sufficiently provided basic sanitation standards historically, now in covid times there is zero certainty the campus will be maintained to cdc guidance. unsafe and high risk is the baseline and that cannot be increased without hiring more custodial crew and supplies. Soap is often not available for days in the students restrooms and surface areas i have witnessed filth for the entire school year. Please support DL until a true baseline of acceptable sanitation is evidenced on our busy campuses. Mahalo. Please note my name and our Hawaiian studies teacher Candy Gaspar asked to share her concern for lack of custodial staff, trash historically not removed daily and lack of soap in restrooms. Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Nullet <kathleen.nullet@gmail.com> on behalf of Kathleen Nullet
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:44 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Kathleen Nullet, a 25-year educator at Kailua Intermediate School. Although I believe the DOE, BOE, Governor and my principal deeply care about the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff, I believe we need to delay the school opening until we have a well-thought-out plan on how we will deal with teacher and substitute shortages when, not if, teachers become sick and need to stay home. This issue has not been addressed.

The State of Hawaii has consistently failed to attract and retain teachers and we do not have an adequate number of substitute teachers, a perennial problem made worse by Covid-19. What will happen when a school suddenly has several teachers out sick? If they have Covid-19 symptoms, they will be out for a minimum of 14 days. We cannot expect sick teachers to teach from home if they are on sick leave. If there are not enough substitute teachers, who will take over the classes? How will substitute teachers be able to teach online if they are not trained? In the past, many teachers have gone to school while sick because it is a lot of work to prepare for a substitute teacher. Are we comfortable with allowing teachers and students on campus with a cold and other non-COVID-19 symptoms and ailments? Is there a plan for a faculty shortage due to illness?

Our federal government's "survival-of-the-fittest" approach to our pandemic is not a plan that will work in our school community. Thankfully Hawaii has put its people first and I believe will continue to do so. Please address the faculty illness/substitute teacher issue to ensure the safety of all. Thank you for all the work you have done and continue to do.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Nullet
National Board Certified Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: LEONARD WILSON <leonard_wilson@me.com> on behalf of LEONARD WILSON
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 20, 2020

TO: State of Hawaii Board of Education

FROM: Leonard Wilson
1030 Aoloa Pl 303-B
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

RE: Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Leonard Wilson and I am a teacher at Kailua High School. With respect I request that the policy of the Board maintain the differential pay that was promised to Special Education teachers, teachers in hard to staff schools, and teachers of Hawaii language. I am a regular classroom social studies teacher and am not affected by the differential pay promise.

However, as qualified teachers with split lines chose to become full-time teachers of Special Education, positions were shifted to accommodate their decision. Full-time Special Education teachers are among the most dedicated professionals in modern society as their experience in the classroom requires the broadest definitions of patience and practice in education, and yet when the instructional day has ended their responsibilities for documentation and planning begin. The promised pay differential was recognition that their work is important and requires great sacrifice for the teacher and for the teacher's family. The pay differential was not dessert, it was an overdue commitment to people who place the needs of others before themselves and their families.

All teachers believe in the vital role that public education serves in the interest of society. We are also aware of the economic crisis that looms in the near future. However, you are the advocates for public education. Please do not belittle those who give so much of their lives to others by conveniently taking away what was recently promised. Fight for education by requesting that the legislature make education an essential profession that deserves what was promised.

Sincerely,

Leonard Wilson

Testimony BOE

From: Rockelle A. <mzrock04@yahoo.com> on behalf of Rockelle A.
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:46 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Name: Rockelle H. Augustin-Sanborn, 5th Grade Teacher, Hilo Union Elementary School

I strongly OPPOSE the Governors mandate to Open Schools on August 4, 2020.

As a first-year teacher, I am not confident about coming into a classroom with the tools necessary as well as the practices and procedures that need to be in place with regard to Covid-19. We have not had the appropriate training on how to implement these new protocols. There are also many questions that have not yet been addressed with the State of Hawaii DOE, which makes me wonder why we would rush the process to open. Why are we being left to figure it out? Why are we putting our Keiki and families at risk? It makes no sense.

Look at our community, look at the nation. NFL players refuse to play because they fear the risk it places on their families. Restaurants are not completely open yet, movie theaters are not open....are schools less important?? Is the safety and well-being of our Keiki compromisable? As a mother, teacher, and community member...I think NOT! Yes, it is a hardship to have my sons home, yes, I want them to be in school, but at what point do I draw the line, at what cost? I would keep them home as long as it takes if my sons are put in an unsafe environment! I want to put out quality education! Being a teacher and all that comes with it is already a lot, why are they adding on this?

If our children are being subject to untrained, uncomfortable, unsure adults...I do not want that on my head. I hope the State can reconsider this and take a long hard look at what you are asking us to do. Does the Governor feel confident if it was his child/grandchild attending school knowing the current situation? Again, I oppose opening schools on August 4, 2020. Yes, I want the schools to open BUT open when the teachers are confident having to been trained and practiced the new protocols.

Me Ka Maluhia,
Rockelle H. Augustin

Testimony BOE

From: Stefanie Sweeney <stef.sweeney@gmail.com> on behalf of Stefanie Sweeney
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Action Item H- Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for BargainingUnit 5 employees

Aloha,

My name is Stefanie Sweeney and I am a teacher at Waikiki School. Like many of my fellow educators, I am greatly anticipating the return to my classroom after school closing for the last quarter of last school year. While there is no other place I would rather be than at Waikiki School, in my classroom, I have been experiencing much trepidation from the lack of information and the lack of guidance that has been provided to us in order to return safely. When HSTA and HIDOE reached the Memorandum of Agreement my anxiety was somewhat quelled and I looked forward to receiving guidance from the Department of Health in order to start moving forward. However, we have not received the agreed upon guidance and our school staff is left scrambling with only two weeks left before students are to arrive on campus. We needed to do the gargantuan task of ensuring that only 12-15 students are in a classroom at one time, which we are going to do by means of a hybrid A/B model in my grade level and by creating more homeroom classes in the lower grades. Then came the challenge of how to provide distance learning for the half of my students who will be at home, which we are also somehow supposed to do simultaneously. When I explained the situation to my friends outside of education, that I will be responsible for teaching students at school in my classroom while teaching students at home, they asked me, "How can you do two different jobs at one time?" Adding to this difficulty is the large number of our school population that is opting to do 100% distance learning. How are we to provide education for them? The DOE has not given us any guidance in how to service the students staying home 100% of the time, and our school is unsure how to meet this need. With our energy and resources already spread thin, we are unsure how to provide for this third cohort of kids. Our school also needs to reconfigure what a school day will look like, with staggered drop off times, staggered recess, and staggered lunch, much of which we have not yet figured out.

Beyond these scheduling and learning quandaries, we are still left with the very real and very frightening issues directly related to the pandemic we are living in. There must be protocols in place to address what happens when someone in our school contracts COVID-19. Under what circumstances will our school be shut down? How long will it be shut down? What will happen if the family member of a student or staff contracts COVID-19?

As a teacher, who is risking her life and her health to go back to work and provide a meaningful education that these children so direly need, I implore you to delay the start of school until these very foundational decisions are made to ensure we can go back to school under the safest circumstances possible given our knowledge and understanding of the situation.

Sincerely,
Stefanie Sweeney

Testimony BOE

From: Robi <robi.nitake@gmail.com> on behalf of Robi
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying of behalf of action item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**. I am a 9th grade World History teacher at McKinley High School. I am urging the BOE to push back the start date of schools from August 4th. We have not been prepared with anything regarding the reopening of schools, distance learning, or what we will do if someone in our class comes down with Covid. Will be close the entire school? Will we quarantine with pay? How is this intended to keep both teachers and students safe? We are supposed to wear masks 24/7 and remain six feet apart from each other. If you have ever met or taught children, then you know how impossible it will be to keep kids from touching or getting close to one another. On the other hand, please come into my classroom and explain to me how you will teach with a mask and face shield on in 95 degree heat. I can guarantee someone will pass out within a few days. I can barely teach without a mask on without sweating profusely and not being able to breathe. Those who are making the decisions need to come and try to do the same without ac like they have in their offices. I am luckily very fortunate that I just gave birth to my son a few weeks ago and was intending to take the semester off for maternity leave, but it pains me to have to watch my colleagues worry about returning to work and bringing this virus home to their families. Please reconsider the opening of schools because we are nowhere near ready to face the realities of any of our own contracting this deadly virus. We should not be guinea pigs that are thrown into the front lines when there is no solution or plan of what will happen WHEN someone comes down with covid. I am writing this email and fighting for my fellow educators because we have no choice in the matter. Students will recover from pushing back their education, but they will never recover if something terrible happens as a result of this virus.

Thank you,
Robi Nitake

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kimberly Pennell <kbpennell28@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kimberly Pennell
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am providing testimony on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and the Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020 2021 Covid19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to Covid19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. My name is Kimberly Lauzon and I am a secondary Social Studies teacher at Mililani High School and the mother of two school-aged children who attend Mililani Uka Elementary and Mililani Middle School.

I want to thank you for taking the concerns of teachers and parents into consideration as we navigate these unprecedented times. I am writing to you today for one very important reason: please consider a phased reopening of Hawaii's schools that would require remote teaching until we go at least 14 days with no new covid19 cases.

When our schools transitioned to remote learning in March, we had fewer cases then we have presently and the DOE reasonably announced we would return to school when we had 30 days of no new cases. Now, as case numbers rise, they want us to return to the very three conditions that the World Health Organization says we should avoid: crowded places, close contact settings, and confined and enclosed spaces. **Please understand that there are no bubbles**. The bubbles are mostly broken, and do not exist in the high schools. I will have six classes of 25-32 students each; although I will see three classes/day at 50% capacity, that is still many people that I will be in contact with each day. Each of my students will be in contact with countless of other students before they are in my class and before going home to their families and out in the community. I will go home to my family. Will I bring the virus home to them? All throughout our communities young people are out with their friends with no signs of social distancing. Sports and band start in just over three weeks. We still do not know what the protocol will be if a student or staff member tests positive. We do know that the adults on campus and student adult family members will be most at risk if we return at this point, as per Dr. Anderson. We do know that there is little research on the spread of the virus with children and the inflammatory disease that is currently infecting children across the country. This is irresponsibly dangerous given our present situation of rising case numbers, fewer tests, and still no vaccine for months at least.

I know there are concerns over remote learning and many are concerned about the emotional health of students. As a teacher and a mother, I am also concerned about access to education and social/emotional health. However, having teachers, staff, or peers become very ill and the chance that some may not recover is much worse for their long-term emotional health. For my daughters, being afraid that their mother will get sick or bring the virus home to them may be worse for their long-term emotional health. It was made very clear to families that the fourth quarter work did not count for a grade, and for that reason, a large majority of students decided not to participate. That will not be the case now.

Please do not send us to be guinea pigs for the whole country. For what? One student will be too many. One teacher will be too many. It is preventable, and only you can prevent it.

Please consider a phased, SAFE reopening of our schools. Require a minimum of 14 days of no new covid19 cases in order for schools to begin a hybrid model.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Kimberly Lauzon

Testimony BOE

From: Linda Jones <lindaloo808@icloud.com> on behalf of Linda Jones
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha. I am a resident of the state of Hawaii for 50 years. I have been an educator for 20 of those years.
This is the first year I am scared to enter my classroom and greet my students. I am afraid for my students. I am afraid for their siblings. I am afraid for their parents. I am afraid for their aunties and uncles and grandparents. I am afraid because we are not prepared to open schools in a safe and conscientious manner.

It looks for all intents and purposes to be a plan developed by those who only want to see the tourist economy return. It appears that those in power care not one whit for the people I have just mentioned or for the teachers and staff at the schools.
I am afraid and stressed and frightened. I am in a high-risk category. I would be a juicy little snack for the virus! And the powers that be are sending me back into the classroom without testing, without protective gear, without any sort of guidance or help! Or training!!!

All I can see is a bunch of politicians wanting to appease the most wealthy, businesses, hotels and everybody else that is connected to the tourist industry. And they want to do that by me risking my life.

Y'all should just be ashamed of yourselves! In March, teachers taught themselves to teach distantly! There was no training, no help... nothing! And we did it! We went from brick and mortar teaching to online teaching in about a week or so!!! What thanks do we get? None. Certainly not by y'all... who are supposed to support teachers. Nope!! Just place more and more responsibilities on the teachers. Just like the Bill Withers tune... "keep on using me... until you use me up!"

If the economy rests on the shoulders of the teachers, as obviously it does, then protect us! Pay us!!! Respect us as professionals!!! Then teachers will stay!! Keep showing yourselves to be political puppets and you'll not have any teachers left to abuse.

Linda Jones
Veteran Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kahanu Nguyen <knguyen@waiakeawaena.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kahanu Nguyen
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:48 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Kahanu Nguyen. I am a 1st grade, dual-certified teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hawaii District on the Island of Hawaii. I have taught for 14 years here in Hawaii. I am submitting testimony for Action Item H: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and HSTA (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I implore you to please delay the opening of school buildings to students. The HIDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online and/or blended learning environment. As you know, everyone will be at risk when schools reopen.The health and safety of our keiki and the staff of our public schools must be paramount in any decision-making. We must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus. This is a process we cannot afford to rush! This is a lot more complex than we can determine in 4 days, it‘s truly unreasonable and just not safe.

Thank you for fighting to ensure that the coronavirus crisis does not result in lasting damage to Hawaii’s public education and our keiki. I passionately ask you to partner with Hawai‘i‘s educators for our future and provide the necessary time to prepare to safely reopen. Thank you for your support and in truly putting our keiki first!

Mahalo, Kahanu Nguyen, Hawaii District, Island of Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: fergus flanagan <fergusandlori@yahoo.com> on behalf of fergus flanagan
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:50 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it may concern;

My name is Lori Rowland and have been teaching at Hana High and Elementary School since 2001. I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

Please delay the opening of schools until September or later.

I feel our staff and students have not had the proper education to open and that too many community members are not following mask protocols. If our community spreads the virus it could be very damaging as we do not even have a hospital in our small town.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lori Rowland

Testimony BOE

From: Katie Mullen <kemullen12@gmail.com> on behalf of Katie Mullen
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

My name is Kathryn Childress. I am a special education teacher for grades kinder- 3rd at Jefferson Elementary in Honolulu.

I strongly believe that we should wait to open schools and use that time to have online school wide planning and professional development. Schools need time to come up with a plan that takes all students into consideration. We need to think about the students with health risks, with parents who may have health risks, or students who live in multi family homes with grandparents who may have health risks.

As a teacher, I can work 110% to make sure the students are distanced and sanitized but nothing takes away from the face that we still have 22 students in a room together for many hours at a time. Germs are going to spread no matter what we do.

I have worked so hard to build trust with the families I work with. Asking them to bring their children back to school when I know I don't feel safe is a blatant betray of their trust. I need time to work with my school and my team to find ways to appropriately teach my students who do not communicate verbally and who have severe autism. These students do not attend to a computer screen and are not able to understand the concept of social distancing in any way. I do not feel safe asking these parents to trust me with keeping multiple students with severe autism healthy and safe.

Delaying the start of school and using that time to have virtual planning time with our schools and team can assure that 1) the students and teachers are safe and healthy 2) that we can create a plan that will actually make a difference. So, we are not just going back to school to check a box to say we tried. Also, so that we are not just jumping online like we did in the spring to say we are online teaching but in reality it's not effective teaching. By delaying the start schools can use all the new ideas and tools to create an effective long term online program that could work for now and for future other circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration in keeping our teachers and students safe.

Testimony BOE

From: Gav Villar <gavinvillar@yahoo.com> on behalf of Gav Villar
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This email is in regard to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please reconsider and do not take away the differential pay for special education, hard to staff and Hawaiian immersion teachers. Teachers were promised this additional pay and it has proven to be successful in getting teacher to staff positions that were previously difficult to. It has been more effective than sending recruiters to the mainland and other strategies that the DOE has employed in the past. To take away this pay after teachers have taken these difficult to staff positions takes away the trust and good faith that teachers have with the DOE.

I have always believed that if you follow where money is allocated, you will see where priorities lay. By taking away the differential pay, the BOE and the DOE is showing that special education students, Hawaiian immersion students and students in poorer areas are not important. The DOE and BOE are saying that the quality of education these students get is not important. I hope this is not the case. Please do not take away the differential pay.

Sincerely,

Gavin Villar
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: lyon@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Board of Education Meeting 7/22/20

This testimony is from Grandma Andaya for her grandson Jayden who is a 4th grade student at Haiku Elem. on Maui.

Do you have any information how classes gonna take place? It's so confusing we are stuck at home protecting the children from getting out there and now we gonna put there life out after all this time keeping them home. Do you know if there's and option on line school?No one has contacted us. How are we supposed to know and plan?
Mahalo LORD have favor and keep our children safe.
Please we ask in JESUS Name intervene for the safety and healthy reason for the kamalii's
🙏Mahalo Ke Akua IESU
❤️👂

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opening up public schools

Mike Hikalea <hale1953.mh@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 1:43 PM
To: BOE.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I refuse to accept this act of stupidity by our public officials to open our schools.
I ask that suspend your opening date.
And utilize learning from a distance,
until we have a clear and accurate plan for the keiki your staff and everyone who's lives you will be jeopardizing.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Delaying School Opening

kristiauyong@yahoo.com <kristiauyong@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 3:23 PM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Kristi Auyong and I am a teacher at Mckinley High School who teaches art. I am also the primary caretaker of an elderly family member. I have been working in the DOE for the past 2 years and really enjoy teaching my students, but I am concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on August 4

The current state plan does not ensure the safe return for students and jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. Below are my concerns:

-Training for distance learning and technology given to teachers with 3 weeks notice during normal school year: During the pandemic, many teachers including myself spent hours trying to learn by ourselves how to teach our students effectively. I spent over 20 hours after Spring Break learning about Google Classroom, Webex, and more to help engage my students. I have attended multiple trainings to help me become a better teacher, but there was very little support during the first two weeks after Spring Break. A better plan and system must be in place internally and externally to handle a crisis like this.

-Lack of consistent communication between schools, local news, HSTA, and the DOE: Because plans changed daily, it was difficult for schools to help parents and students understand what is expected of them. At times, our only consistent source of information was the news instead of internally. The language used in media interviews is very difficult for families and students that speak a different language to understand. The many discrepancies in the media, school communication and DOE communication causes a lot of confusion for students, families, and communities to understand what is being said. A streamlined document from the DOE stating all these procedures explicitly and in different languages is needed moving forward to serve the community.

-Concerns for cleaning: There is a shortage of disinfectant products that will help protect teachers and students in the classroom. Many classrooms do not have sinks available to make hand washing a viable solution at all times. Other concerns include the monitoring of students socially distancing in hallways and bathrooms, disinfecting between secondary and elementary classroom passing times, and the resupply of cleaning products in classrooms and bathroomson frequently.

There has not been an explicit procedures by the DOE on how all schools will handle this which is another safety concern. It has only been addressed that teachers should not need to clean, but there is little direction on how will surfaces will be cleaned to avoid cross contamination and the spread of Coronavirus.

I am in support of pushing back reopening school because of these concerns and lack of clear procedures to help teachers and schools navigate this difficult time.

I propose that the DOE considers having distance learning for students during first quarter and then a blended model if there are no active coronavirus cases for 4 weeks. The extra time in pushing back reopening schools on a blended model allows the DOE to improve existing guidelines to be more specific. It also gives time for the other unions to speak with their meinbers to allow them to voice the concerns. All these collective feedback is needed to help move the DOE forward to a better model than what it currently exists now

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and best wishes to you and your families during this difficult time.

Sincerely,
Kristi Auyong

****
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****

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony for 7/22/2020

Susanne Lindberg <dragonflydive@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 4:37 PM
To: "BOE.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov" <BOE.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE members,

I am Susanne Lindberg, a 4th grade teacher at Admiral Nimitz elementary. I have been a classroom teacher since 1988.

I would like to address the date of return to school, and it's safety for the students, teachers and family's/community.

For the last 4 years my students have been 100% military. We know there has been an alarming up swing in Covid cases. Unfortunately, From what I have been told, we can not be informed what the Number of cases are on the base that we serve. I realize it could be higher than what the general population is, due to travel related to the military protocol. This is very disconcerting.

I believe
We should consider a later
Starting date to wait for the cases to drop down and we should at the same time consider starting totally on line. I am personally an asthmatic and I realize our population has a higher than normal population of diabetics and compromised immune systems.

I believe this should be taken into account, as we rush to open before any other state. Perhaps we should consider waiting until after Labor
Day at the very least.

Thank you for your consideration,
Susanne Lindberg

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

What your "building relationships teacher" will look like

Teacher Rights 808 <teachpower808@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:14 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Yeah. That's going to make kids feel super connected from 6 feet away.

When was the last time any of you spent a day in a classroom?

8AC6F14C-692B-4C8A-9431-DC67D07223E2-1-scaled.jpeg
84K

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re-opening: Distance Learning Solution

Laura Paet-Tamboa <laurapaettamboa@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 5:54 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Corey Rosenlee <crosenlee@hsta.org>, TulsiOffice@mail.house.gov, kmpine@honolulu.gov

Aloha,

Parents, teachers, staff, and kids are uncomfortable returning back to school with COVID-19 cases and hospitalization on the rise. Compared to the Mainland, are cases are considered low and want to keep them low. Hong Kong saw 300 cases for the country and shut down schools, Disneyland, and all non-essential business to work from home because they know how quickly COVID-19 can get out of control. This is unprecedented times and hopefully temporary (18 months until we have a vaccine). We need to be nimble, flexible, innovative, and unconventional. Just because this is how were schooled doesn't mean it's right or the only way.

My Proposal:
-I would like to see the DOE to take a pause on re-opening and move to Distance Learning until the COVID-19 cases see a 14 day (consistently) decrease. Usually the first month of school is a review. So the schools can have reviews available via hard copies, IXL, Freckle, Kid Biz, Brain Pop, etc. Teachers can be available via Webex or Zoom for one on one appointments with parents and kids.

-During this time have teachers start to video record teachings for each grade level. This would be the "HOW TO" as if they were teaching a classroom of kids. This would allow parents to review teachings on their timeline to allow parents to work and teach when parents are not working. This would be in conjunction with school workbooks they would normally use at school.

-Teachers would be available for one-on-one teachings via zoom or Webex if student/parent is struggling.

-DOE- needs to be creative and look to online schools to make public schools successful and keep everyone safe.

In conclusion, yes, I want my kids back to school but will it be safe for all parties involved? Right now, the Risk is HIGH, too HIGH that I don't think anyone wants to take. WE can ALWAYS play catch up with year round school, No Fall break, No Winter break, No Spring break, or Summer school, BUT we cannot bring a person back alive if they pass away from COVID-19. Let's be innovative with DISTANCE LEARNING and look to online schools as a model to be successful for our youth. We can have parents working and assisting with school teachings/learnings to keep everyone safe. WE are in this together!!!

Mahalo,
Concerned Parent who has to work

Sent from my iPad

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Bryce Tomatani <bryce.tomatani@k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:05 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE/DOE,

Please reconsider the physical opening of schools toward a later date, so that we may be adequately trained. If other major industries are still having their employees work from home, why are we being sent back into the classroom? Teachers would come into contact with far more people than these outside industry employees. Thank you for taking the time to read this email, take care.

Mahalo

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Fall Semester

Tracie Matsumoto <tracie@matsumoto.brower.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:11 PM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My daughter will be a freshman at Waiakea High School this Fall. The current plan is for her to attend classes on campus 1 day a week with odd classes on one day and even on another. This would mean seeing her teachers for each subject only 2 times a month. I do not see the benefit of this arrangement on her education outweighing the risk of exposure. I would like to advocate for a 100% distance learning with her teachers for the Fall semester.

The education my daughter received from her “live” teachers for optional choice boards during the last semester at Waiakea Intermediate was by far superior to the total online Edmentum software classes she got during her summer bridge course taken this summer. In my opinion, it is wasteful to have a teacher teach the same class to 4 different sets of students A-E, F-K, L-P, and Q-Z in person and student be on their own for 3 days. It would make more sense to have the teacher teach from home and have teachers and students who do not have online access to be socially distanced at school and have the others stay home. This would allow classes to progress at a somewhat normal pace and allow students to get the best from their education. Since an important benefit of in person classes is socialization, clubs and other extracurricular activities might be considered for afterschool with social distancing and masks. That way kids will only be exposed to limited numbers of individuals but still be able to get the benefits of school socialization. This way groups would be focused on interest rather than letter of their last name.

We are living through unprecedented times, we need to focus on what is best for our students and teachers. Unnecessary exposure for the sake of having in person classes at such a limited scale does not make sense. It would be better to focus on what is best for their education. I believe a 100% distance learning with their local teachers for Fall semester will provide the best education for the students at this time.

Best wishes,

Tracie Matsumoto Brower

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Reopening School Aug 4, 2020

Shazlyn's Life <shannellpila@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:01 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us

Hi ,

I am a concerned parent of a 1st grade student at Nanakuli Elementary School.

I wanted to know how many students will be in my child's class? How will they stay at social distant? How can they focus when they have to keep a mask on while learning? I am a essential worker and I work 6-8 hour shifts having to wear protective gear and its frustrating to me. I can barely hear customers with the mask, glasses keep foging up. I can only imagine my 6 year old trying to focus on her learning with normal kid distractions on top of "the new normal". Why can't they do the social learning? & yes I understand that some families are not as fortunate to have the tools and etc my child has, but since we do have it, why can't we take advantage of it? Our elementary was having students borrow devices. What made the change to open up schools while "THE COVID COUNT" is still on the rise? What happens if and when a child gets covid? IT DOES NOT STOP ONLY THE SCHOOL. The family of that child also gets affected then if they are essential workers their work place is then affected its a merry-go-round.

Its already frustrating to me being an essential worker and being at great exposure then having a possibility to bring it home to my family. And now to send my kid off to school it even crazier.

My child is already freaked out. She fights us to go anywhere. Even to go walking or whatever the case may be.

I know we need to try move forward, but is it really worth it to put our precious children at risk? As we say children is our future, so let's start thinking of theirs while they still have one.

Mahalo for reading.

- - A concerned Parent

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on the Reopening of Schools:

Jan Avellana <javellana@hes.k12.hi.us> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:11 PM
To: senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov, senkeohokalole@capitol.hawaii.gov, senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov, sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov, senmoriwaki@capitol.hawaii.gov, senkim@capitol.hawaii.gov, Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov, BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, christina.kishimoto@k12.hi.us

Superintendent Kishimoto,
This is in direct reply to your most recent video message to educators and testimony in favor of delaying the re-opening of students return to school. The late civil rights leader John Lewis said, “When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something." This is exactly what teachers are doing by challenging the Hawaii Department of Education and lack of preparedness to safely reopen schools at this time. Who knows better than teachers, the challenges of teaching face-to-face in the time of COVID-19? A wise leader would have had more classroom teachers give input throughout the entire re-opening planning process so that Hawaii’s school reopenings could have been done efficiently and safely. Instead, we are here.

For you to cast doubt on our courage and our commitment to our keiki and their ohana is disingenuous. The fact that teachers are advocating for a safe learning environment for ourselves and our students and proactively pointing out the dangers we see ahead, does not mean we are cowardly—it does not mean that we do not want to do our share to help Hawaii’s COVID-10 recovery efforts. (If you question our collective courage, we welcome you into our classrooms during an active shooter drill.) On the contrary, our voices now raised in alarm and concern is proof positive that we care about our students, their families and our own.

By shaming our legitimate concerns over the DOE’s and DOH’s lack of transparency and planning by calling into question the care and commitment we have to our students and their ohana, is insulting. Hawaii’s teacher’s will not be bullied into silence when we know that the Department of Health and the Hawaii Department of Education are putting the lives of our students and their families and yes, teachers, in danger. No one in Hawaii—grocery workers, bank personnel, service workers, delivery, custodians, security staff, shopping center workers beaches, park and government agencies, and especially not our children and the teachers that teach and care for them—should be put in harm’s way, made to work in an unsafe environment without the proper protective equipment, ventilation, training or clearly documented guidance from the Department of Health, not for the sake of any economy or anyone’s convenience.

Be clear that our call for the deferral of the beginning of student school year is not an contrived excuse by teachers to avoid work. We have mortgages and bills and families to support, in addition to having an unquestionable commitment to our students’ whole being. Of course we want to teach and reopen the year! But not like this, not in the midst of a global wide pandemic.What educators are saying is that the existing plan laid out by the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education—one week before teachers go back into the classroom—is not adequate. We are saying that a 100% distance learning option was never on the table for us to consider, as one of the viable models of instruction, as it should have been. We are asking you as we have been, to open your mind to a myriad of innovative ways that teaching and learning can be done without all of the risks of face-to-face teaching, and in lieu of this option in all but the most extreme circumstances, we are asking you to help ensure and prioritize the safety of our teachers, staff, students and families.

Thank you,
Janice Avellana
Grade 1 Teacher,
Hahaione Elementary School

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ellery Galanto <egalanto@gmail.com> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:47 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education,

My name is Ellery Galanto, I have a daughter that goes to Mililani Ike. They have recently offered 100% distant learning last week. I signed my daughter up, no more than 30 mins after the principal sent our the email of the school offering 100% distant learning. They offered the distant learning a week and a half after they only offered mixed school and online. I had to write several times to my daughters teacher, BOE, DOE, and HSTA to ask for distant learning.

I offer testimony to the fact that there is a deadly virus still spreading across the world. I hear from many parents that their afraid of their child falling behind. What? These parents are either scientifically illiterate or they have their priorities in a strange order. I will not risk my children's lives. And, I will speak out against my neighbors who send their children to school only to risk them bringing the virus into our streets. This virus may seem to be less deadly to children. But our children, if allowed to go to school will be a vehicle to the spread of this virus. It's not about our children falling behind that should concern you, it's about the risk people are now going to take with children going to school, taking that chance in getting the virus, especially when you give the option to the teacher to decide for students to wear mask or not. Opening schools to on campus education is a slippery slope, with this virus running rampant across the globe. If you don't know what slippery slope means, it is "an idea or course of action which will lead to something unacceptable, wrong, or disastrous." School is a large group setting. You're not only risking the lives of our children but of the adults, when the children come home. The Department of Education and the Board of Education will be accomplices to endangering our children, harming our children, and to the murder children and adults. The schools, the superintendent, the DOE, mistakenly delude themselves to think that there is a protective bubble in the class. There is no protective bubble. The students go home, some students will go to sports and other extra curricular activities, and then they return to school. How can the DOE, BOE, and teacher, be so sure the children are not infected with the virus coming from many of these places.

My wife works as a nurse at a local hospital. We wanted 100% distant learning months ago. We are already in a higher risk group of getting it, with my wife working at the hospital. And now, your about to open schools next month, with the gathering of students from backgrounds you can not fully comprehend. And you call it a bubble. There is no bubble.

My daughter is already signed up for 100% distant learning. Now I speak against the option that you give these other parents, which will eventually cause the further spread of this highly virulent COVID-19. You're about to open Pandora's Box even further.

This is a war against a virus. To open the schools up next month with any sort of on campus learning for children, amounts to opening a new front line in a battlefield. A front line that, you are putting our children, the staff on campus, at risk of this virus and all of its long list of debilitating diseases and even death, as well as the adults these children's come home to. Give the scientist time to do their jobs. The great pharmaceuticals of the world are on this.

Thank you for your time,

Ellery Galanto
E: egalanto@gmail.com
C: 808-255-4991

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re-opening of School Aug 4

Alyssa Garcia <alyssa.garcia@wilsonschoolhawaii.org> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 7:54 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
Thank you for all your dedication and time you have been putting into during this time of crisis. I am a high risk teacher with severe asthma, but with no doubt want to go back into the classroom. I teach at Wilson Elm and would appreciate more than anything to DELAY the start of children. This well GIVE US TIME to implement and set up our school so that when the children do come back, they will TRUST US and TRUST the system that will be NEW TO ALL OF US. I think we are trying to set things up now and IT IS NOT OUR TIME TO BE AT WORK OR WORKING YET.... we have families, we have lives, we have our HEALTH to be looking after and just like you we have to take care of things day by day. SO I ASK PLEASE consider delaying the start of school for our keiki! We want the best for them and we WANT TO REACH EVERY child, but trust me once once of us gets sick, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO REACH ANY CHILD. Please consider.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ALOHA.

Love,
Alyssa

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Urgent

Miriam Clarke <miriam.clarke@k12.hi.us>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 8:14 AM

July 22, 2020

Thank you to the Board for reading my testimony.

While teachers and students have been anticipating a safe reopening of schools, the district has been making plans to steal our students.

I received word from my principal yesterday, July 21 that our school would be piloting an online program to accommodate the virtual learning for at least 34 percent of our students. There was a link embedded in the email and a password to gain access. I pressed play and instantly my body reacted with an increased heart rate and a gut wrenching sensation.

As I listened in one window I googled ASU Digital Prep from another. I quickly learned that Arizona State University has a charter school to teach students in grades K-12 virtually. Here is a direct quote from the section, “See how we partner with schools.” “We leverage the latest ASU learning technologies along with industry leading tools to connect our highly qualified teachers with your students at home or at school.”

I have scheduled a meeting with my principal this morning at 10 am to discuss this matter further in search for answers that make sense. Because the deadline for testimony submissions is coming to a close I would like to bring up a matter that I find to be a great threat to public education.

Why are we subcontracting our students to receive an alternative education? Why are we funneling CARES money away from Hawaii’s highly qualified teachers and into the pockets of a charter school in Arizona. This seems criminal and irresponsible.

Our principals are relying on a quick ,in the box fix for a situation that is unraveling at lightning speed. Teachers have been blindsided worrying about their mortality while the Department of Education is making deals for out of state teachers to run our classrooms.

While this is an emerging situation, arising exactly one week before teachers return, I beg the Board to consider the severity of this monumental decision. If we allow our students to be educated by ASU Digital Prep, we abandon the curriculum we already have. More importantly we threaten the livelihood of our most precious resource, the teachers who have dedicated their lives to serving Hawaill’s keiki.

Why did we wait until the last minute to figure out how to integrate our home learners into our classrooms. I can tell you right now that I am capable of serving ALL of my students in my inclusive classroom.

Our schools will be splintered into two separate entities. One that teaches Hawaii’s standard curriculum and one that uses the non research based curriculum of Arizona State University Digital Prep. Why are we splintering our schools? Why are we funneling money into the pockets of this Arizona Charter School? I want the answers to these questions so our teachers have a chance to fight for the jobs they love and have been trained to do.

Thank you for considering this situation as it is just rising to the surface.

Miriam Clarke
3rd grade teacher, Pukalani Elementary School
808-269-2470

Testomony

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Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Delay opening of schools

Miss Sally <sthrashes@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 8:34 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us

Delay the opening of schools. Offer virtual learning until this pandemic is over. Value the children's lives and the teacher's lives. The decision you are aiming for will create more chaos and death. Listen to the people and do pono things.
Sally Thrasher

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for BOE Meeting 7/23/20

Michael Fricano II <monsieurgrand02@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 8:55 AM
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Michael Fricano II. I am a Hawaii educator of 13 years. I have many close friends that work in the HI DOE system and they also have kids that attend school in the HI DOE system. I am very concerned for my friends and their children.

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Using Old Survey Data

First, please ask Superintendent Kishimoto to share the DOE's **most current and relevant survey data** on teacher's and family's concern with reopening schools? And please ask her to stop referencing survey data from late may/early june that was misguided and under completely different pandemic circumstances.

Kishimoto has been referencing parent survey data from late May/early June to guide their decision on reopening schools. She touts that only 15% of parents that took their survey want 100% distance learning. When this survey was conducted in May/June there were only an average of 1-3 cases per day in May and because of low case numbers we began opening up businesses again. Also, the "Distance Learning" that was offered by the DOE in the 4th quarter was a complete and utter failure because grades were not given and families were told that participating was optional. So, based on these circumstances, of course parents would not want 100% distance learning in late may/early july.

You need to help Superintendent Kishimoto recognize that circumstances have changed and that she is not listening to the THOUSANDS of educators and parents that she is supposed to LEAD with compassion and understanding.

4 Phases Reopening Plan

I would like the BOE and the DOE to strongly consider a phased reopening plan similar to the plan proposed by the Massachusetts Teachers Unions (https://www.wgbh.org/news/education/2020/07/15/massachusetts-teachers-unions-unveil-four-phased-reopening-plan).

This is the plan:

Phase 1: Ample time for teachers to set up classrooms, learn health/safety protocols, and receive PD (no students)

Phase 2: Meet with students and FAMILIES (virtual or in person) to explain health protocols, conduct emotional wellness checks, basic needs assessments, evaluated tech needs, and building school community. (This does not mean students back in school)

Phase 3: A month later, beginning instruction based on student needs (remotely, in-person, or combo), created by teachers. (This is when students would "return to school")

Phase 4: 6-8 weeks later, Assessment of educational progress and public health to determine whether to continue as planned or change course.

Phase 1 provides the necessary training for all school faculty/staff BEFORE students return to campus. Training and PD on safely reopening schools and conducting online/distance learning SHOULD NOT be happening while students are returning to campus. That makes no sense.

Phase 2 gives schools ample time to build relationships and support students and families before learning officially begins.

Phase 3 is the official start of school, whether that's on campus or online. Either way, school is starting after training/PD is conducted and after supports are in place for families.

Phase 4 provides necessary evaluation of plans and public health and allows for changes to be made.

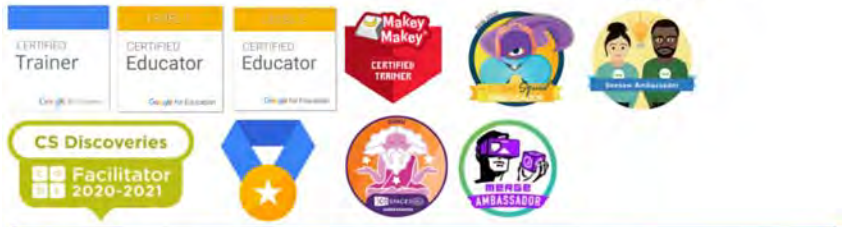
Please urge Superintendent Kishimoto and the DOE to rethink plans for reopening schools. Encourage the DOE to rely on more current, relevant data and possibly consider conducting a survey of teachers and parents to guide their decisions. Aug 4 is fast approaching but it's not too late to make the right decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Fricano II

Educational Technology Integration Specialist & Maker Ed Educator

Google for Education Certified Trainer | Product Expert { Google Classroom, Google for Education, Google Expeditions/Tour Creator, YouTube Kids



~ Children need our presence more than our presents. ~

www.EdTechnocation.com | www.arvreduhub.com

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Frances Kramer <fkramer808@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 9:13 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education:
My name is Frances Kramer and I am submitting testimony with regard to a few issues: opening of public schools on August 4, 2020 and Action Item G: Board Action on the discontinuance of compensation for special education teachers, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.
My son and his wife are both high school teachers, one at Radford High School and the other at Moanalua High School. Both are dedicated to serving the education of students at their respective schools and have gone the extra mile with Masters Degrees in their subject fields - Special Education and Business. They have been teaching for at least eight years and now have two children of their own. I have been assisting with the care of their young children while they dedicate their time to teaching careers.
I am extremely concerned with the D.O.E. 's preparedness for the opening of the school year with the safety and health of the students and teachers to prevent the spread of COVID 19. As the caretaker of my son and daughter-in-law's children (infant and toddler) and cancer survivor, 70 years old and in the high risk kupuna group, I am unsettled as to the safety precautions not satisfactorily addressed for the teachers. We live in Hawaii with the cost of living extremely high. Teachers' parents, the kupuna group need to help provide child care and if we are not protected, teachers would not have the support they need to go to work. Additionally addressing the issue of Action Item G, teachers have gone the extra mile in their education and training to teach in a specialized field. They deserve the compensation for their dedication to special needs education. Finally, the D.O.E. is responsible for not just students but to support their teachers and provide a safe and healthy environment. Thank you for allowing me to share my opinion for this critically important situation facing our State of Hawaii education program.

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

Kusum Rossman <kusum@hawaiidocumentservice.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 9:34 AM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

7-22-2020

Dear Board Members:

I am opposed to the opening of schools for in-school attendance in Fall 2020.
At least it is not safe to open schools in August.
It is extremely unsafe for everyone in the community to be together at this particular time. Need to have more understanding of these grim circumstances that we are around.
Please do not open the schools now and say sorry later....it might cost the life of our loved ones.

Mahalo Ke Akua
Kusum Rossman (a concerned mother)

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Testimony of

Melvin M. Sakurai, Ph.D.
Management Consultant, Research Information Services

July 21, 2020

Regarding

BOE General Business Meeting

Agenda Item VI-D

HIDOE Plan to Reopen Public Schools August 4th

Members of the Hawaii Board of Education

I wish to testify opposing the Department of Education's plan to reopen and resume in-class instruction on August 4th.

Like promoting Mega Super-Spreader events every weekday: Under circumstances of surging community spread (the recent decline in infection counts are most likely due to a significant reduction in Hawaii's testing capabilities as essential reagents are directed elsewhere to mainland hot spots)—the HIDOE plan to reopen August 4th is tantamount to actively promoting Mega Super-Spreader events involving 100,000+ students and teachers every weekday. While there is justified concern about the City Kalakaua Sunday Stroll events involving a few hundred people 4 times a month being a super spreader event—reopening our schools prematurely would amplify those concerns many times over.

Our children aren't human Guinea Pigs: Knowing that the Covid-19 virus has an incubation period of up to two weeks, during which pre-/asymptomatic transmission is possible, means that by the time we see concerning count surges it will be too late because the precipitating events happened long ago with untold community infections since. It would be bad enough if we were dealing with small clusters like a gym, but when 100,000+ individuals are involved, the geometric infection spread potential can be catastrophic! Under these circumstances it feels as if there is a willingness to put our children at risk as human Guinea Pigs in hopes this will not happen.

Among other especially troubling concerns are:

1. DOH's very marginal testing capabilities and resources (recently cut by half according to reports) and woefully inadequate contact tracing resources (DOH is hoping to have 300 trained tracers "soon" where the Association of State & Territorial Health Officials tell us we should have 1,400 at minimum)

2. HIDOE's safety protocol plan may still have masking as optional and gives little attention to effectively addressing the fact that the primary infection vector for COVID-19 (a respiratory infection) is not contaminated surfaces but the airborne viral load and length of exposure

3. The Governor's flawed and dangerous pre-testing program needs critical changes to avoid a flood of infected visitors who are falsely deemed "safe" because they pre-tested but have become infected between the time they were tested and landing in Hawaii (perhaps as much as 30%)

4. The very marginal capability of DOT and volunteer AGs to effectively enforce the 14-day quarantine and then only reactively—after violators have been out in the community for hours and days

Re-opening the schools as currently planned at this time and under these circumstances would be inviting disaster—some school districts on the mainland already understand this (I believe Los Angeles has cancelled in-class instruction for the year) and I am hoping the Board of Education is committed to protecting our kids, teachers, and community in the same way. HIDOE seems stubbornly committed to open regardless.

The time is not right and effective protections are not in place to safely open our schools.

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Take enough time to do this right

Jen Magoon <jvagabonds@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 10:35 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us

Aloha,

I urge you to take your time and make sure that everything is in place before school re-opens. I am trying to prepare for my daughters to go and I don't even know what to tell them. Will they need to wear a mask? I hope so to keep their teachers safe. But when and for how long. What will their classrooms look and feel like.

What are the policies for when to stay home and when to go to school? What counts as sick? What happens if someone in the school/class/family is Covid positive? I feel like there are still SO many questions and we could use some more time to answer them.

Sincerely,
Jen Magoon
Parent at Waikoloa Elementary

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please open Public school

cherieanna <cherieanna@mail.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 10:49 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,
I am pro opening and having our keiki at school. I have five keiki, four of which will be attending this year. My children are all at different grades/levels of learning and I can attest from the stint of online/distance learning we had at the end of last year how each child is different and some do not do well without in person help. I can also tell you the sanity of our home being stuck each day as a one room school house with all different levels and most of them needing help or attention left me as a parent feeling as though I was neglecting my infant and household chores while trying mt best to help and or keep the other kids attending to their school work. I felt as if we were never doing everything the teachers were asking for and fighting with the kids constantly to get it done. The one who was old enough to direct herself and get her work done still needed some in person help with understanding some of the assignments and started having depression issues from lack of social verbal interaction (we don't have extra phones for our kids, and as it is had to borrow school computers as well). The small percent of Covid 19 cases in Hawaii youth and children should stay low as long as we keep foreign/new people germs at bay by keeping the quarantine for new comers and tourists allowing kids to stay at school. Again I plead to keep these childrens normalcy as much as we can by keeping them at school!
Mahalo, Mrs. C. Vigil

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S7, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Gmail

BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

DOE not ready to reopen

Blaine De Ramos <undrcvrlvr94@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 11:26 AM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

I feel the schools are not ready to reopen. children live in 2 separate households and I cannot be separated from them for a 2 week long quarantine. Hawaiian Airlines held a class with grown adults that know better and 25 people tested positive for Covid. 1 person from that class infected 10 people in 2 different classes at a 100% infection rate. If there is any truth to the BOE approving this plan 3 years ago, times have changed and this is a new pandemic unplanned for. You need to revisit and make adjustments to this new virus.

Blaine DeRamos

Sent from my iPhone

Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Kristel Florendo <kristel.florendo@k12.hi.us> Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 11:51 AM
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Aloha,
I am testifying in regards to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Kristel Florendo and I am speaking as a special education teacher. I teach at Ewa Elementary.

I am asking that you **REJECT** this proposal and continue to fund the teacher shortage differential for this upcoming school year. The special education teacher differential, which was already promised, is imperative as an incentive for all special education teachers to stay in their current "critical shortage" area. The teachers who work in this area with the "most vulnerable" student population will be putting themselves even more at risk right now since most of these students are not able to follow CDC recommendations for social distancing or wearing masks. These students would also not benefit as much from distance learning or hybrid schedules and therefore need to be in school. It is in my opinion that we continue to maintain our limited certified special education teachers in the classroom by continuing to give them the differential pay. Without it, you will lose a great number of CERTIFIED special education teachers, forcing the state to fall further behind in providing appropriate educational services to our most vulnerable students. Please consider other ways to reduce the budget shortfalls. I understand that we all need to sacrifice things at this time, but let's not have it be at the expense of our "most vulnerable" student population or these "critical shortage" areas. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kristel Florendo

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Gmail BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

2020-2021 School year (from parent)

Catch All <catch.all@jbbrower.net> Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:10 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,
I would like to put a recommendation in for 100% distance learning, where the teacher conducts classes to remote students. This way, the students can get the benefit of the teacher's guidance for all classes. You could even have 1/4 of the students in class and 3/4 distant, swapped out each day or each week (to reduce between-student cleaning) to let the students still get the full school experience. Students without internet access at home could have designated, socially distanced learning locations in the school. If all classrooms are occupied, use the gym, library, or cafeteria if you need to.

When I worked at Purdue University, I helped design a distance learning program where a professor taught a class at the main campus in Indiana for half the semester while the other half of the class was in a distant classroom in Hannover Germany. In the second half of the semester, the professor swapped classes and taught from Germany. And this was almost 20 years ago using Polycoms. Today it is simplistic to use Google and Zoom to achieve a similar model, but with the students swapping out in the classroom and the rest in their homes (or alternate viewing areas in the gym, library, or cafeteria as previously discussed). Make this swap every week instead of every day and you quarter your cleaning/disinfecting work.

The current plan is putting too much teaching work on the parents for 3 or 4 days each week, as the kids constantly ask questions on stuff (that most parents may not know the answer to or teach it wrong). I experienced this with my daughter's experience in the Waiakea HS summer bridge, where the whole first half was a terrible self-learning math and study skills that had my daughter interrupting my work-at-home every 10-15 minutes (no exaggeration) to ask me math question or how to do something.
This "teachers teaching the same thing to 1/4 of the class in person over and over for 3 days" thing is NOT a good use of the teacher's time, and is a waste of money! Plus, we are risking our child's health and the health of her grandmother (who lives with us) for a lousy 4.5 hours of teacher instruction per week. Stupid!

Thank you for your time,
Jerry Brower (parent)

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Jerry B. Brower
Hilo, HI 96720
(213)JERRYBB
e-mail: jerry@jbbrower.net

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Tell a man there are 300 billion stars in the universe and he'll believe you. Tell him
a seat has wet paint on it and he'll have to touch it to be sure.
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"This e-mail was sent using 100% recycled electrons"

Testimony BOE

From: You Jin Sohn <ysohn@puuhale.k12.hi.us> on behalf of You Jin Sohn
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Pu'uhale Elementary School and I am testifying on Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

As an educator and a member of the community I strongly believe that the health and safety of our students and teachers should be the number one priority when it comes to our public schools. We do not have the proper training or equipment to return to school and provide a safe learning environment for our children. How will teachers be able to teach when we are in fear of contracting a fatal virus and possibly giving it to not only our close loved ones, but spreading it to others in the community.

Not only are we NOT ready to return to school but important questions that validate our concerns have not been answered. Questions like, when will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide guidance on the reopening of school buildings which the HIDOE agreed to in our MOU? What are the options for families who are seeking 100-percent distance learning and how are the teachers being trained to teach those students while teaching students in the classrooms? What are the clear protocols of wearing a mask at school, especially when our school is an enclosed building with central AC. What happens when a student or adult tests positive for COVID? How are the staff trained to care for very young students and students who are medically fragile? How will schools determine that newly enrolled students' households followed the 14 days of proper self-isolation if they have traveled outside of Hawaii or military households that have moved here? If and when a school needs to shut down in the case of positive COVID infection how will schools shut down and transition into a 100-percent distance learning environment and how will all teachers be able to teach a 100-percent virtual classroom with no proper training?

As of now, we teachers seem to be most at risk when schools reopen. In turn putting their own children and family members at risk because we will be in contact with dozens, maybe hundreds, of children for hours in a day, in an enclosed environment. Please put our safety first, not just save our lives but the many lives that we will be in contact with after our work shift has ended. Let's stop something bad from happening before it happens and take the proper precautions before opening up our schools again. As you can see so many questions have not been answered and the numbers are only increasing in Hawaii...

Thank you,
Jin Sohn

Testimony BOE

From: Kristina Anderson <adcopycat@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristina Anderson
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:55 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on start of In-person school

Aloha BOE:

I am a Substitute II in the South Kona area of the Big Island. I have worked in the Konawaena complex for a decade and teach all levels, from K-12, SPED and FSC. I have had a very enjoyable career as a sub and am the number one sub to call on many teacher lists. But I am very very nervous about the start of school this year, for a number of reasons.
First, I am over 60, and nervous about compromising my health. Right now, I am in excellent health, but we have seen Covid take even healthy people down.

The only job I would consider at this time is an FSC room, with limited students who don't change classes. I would not teach in enclosed classrooms with no ventilation or AC right now.

Even when teachers are seemingly properly prepared, they can still get COVID!

There was a case in Arizona this summer, where three teachers taught summer school and were highly prepared with PPE and shields and everything. All three got Covid and one died.

Who will provide the PPE for our teachers, who would now be on the frontlines? We are not prepared like healthcare workers. I personally can't afford to outfit myself in PPE just to teach. And after hearing about the case in Arizona, I'm very nervous and scared opening too early will lead to really bad results. What if one student/staff or teacher got COVID in a school? Will the whole thing shut down?

PLEASE DELAY the start of in-person school. It's way too early to open.
We are still in an active pandemic. Please consider distance/virtual learning at least through the end of the year. Give teachers time to train for it. Thank you!

Kristina Anderson, South Kona

808-328-2462

Testimony BOE

From: Noelle-Lili Edejer <noelle-lili.edejer@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Noelle-Lili Edejer
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

My name is Noelle Edejer, a teacher at Waipahu High School

I am asking that you please delay students' return to campus. All I am asking is that you please protect your teachers. We are all here for one reason:our students. Of course we as educators want schools to open normally, however, these are not normal times. It is unsafe. There is already a shortage in teachers in Hawaii. Risking our lives while we're going to be exposed to hundreds of students everyday- that is not ok. If we as teachers get sick, who then picks up for us? The subs? The subs themselves are going from school to school. How is a substitute teacher who has exposed themselves to hundreds of other students from other schools supposed to be a safe option for our students?

It would be beneficial for teachers to go back, however, not for students to go back. I would be able to do my job more effectively if I knew I was safe. Instea, if you allow students to come back, I know that I will be preoccupied with trying to keep myself safe rather than teaching. Please delay students' return from campus.

--
Mahalo,
Noelle Edejer
Waipahu High School
808-307-9487

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Testimony BOE

From: Dawn Rodriguez <dawnr715@aol.com> on behalf of Dawn Rodriguez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying to Action Item H. I am both a parent of two schoolbag children (Makakilo Elementary School and Radford HS), as well as an educator (Makakilo Elementary School.)

We are not ready for students to return to schools. Educators HAVE NOT received training throughout the summer to address distant learning. While there has been trainings available, all training has been OPTIONAL to teachers. There is no record of which teachers took what training. Training is not consistent for teachers and many have no relevant training address the current school year. In addition, as we are planning for the upcoming school year, we are having to completely overhaul our curriculum and pacing guides to meet distance learning needs. We need time to learn new curriculum, new programs, and adjust to only seeing students in person 2 days a week.

In regards to health, we have no guidance in regards to what happens if someone is sick on a campus. It was stated that students will have Ohana bubbles. In elementary school, I would agree that the students are with the same students all day. We cannot just shut down one specific classroom; what about siblings and other adults the students have had contact with? For my high school student, he will go to ALL even classes on one day, ALL odd classes the other. I highly doubt that he will have the same students in every class.

There are still too many unanswered questions. Teachers and schools ARE NOT READY for students to return. We want to be able to best serve our community. We need time to plan for the return of students, train on new curriculum and platforms, and completely reorganize and restructure our classroom to be ready to SAFELY see students.

Respectfully,

Dawn Rodriguez

Testimony BOE

From: Traci Rosario <traci.rosario@gmail.com> on behalf of Traci Rosario
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing testimony regarding Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

My name is Traci Rosario and I have been teaching at Maui High School for 20 years. I am so excited to see my students and excited about starting school. I love my profession; it is my passion and my life.
BUT, I am also scared-- very scared. I feel like we do not have everything/anything in place that we need. Yesterday I bought a $40 gallon of hand sanitizer and a $50 box of masks to have available for my students in case they do not have one. I also purchased a spray hand sanitizer machine for another $50. I am making all of these purchases myself because I am scared. I am scared my school will not receive enough monies to provide these things. I am scared that I am going to get sick in school without these items because my spouse has respiratory issues, my mom is a 2x breast cancer survivor and is on a chemo treatment. I am immunocompromised with an autoimmune disease. I am scared I am not prepared enough for my students both educational wise, mentally wise, and safety-wise. I have not been sleeping well because all these thoughts keep going around and around. We are just not there yet and we are being told to come to school when really nothing is in place to protect me and my family and my students.
I have been asking my financial advisor if it is possible for me to retire early because I am scared. I have lots of experience writing for a textbook company and could very easily slide into doing that more full time and from the safety of my own home. I don't want to do this. I LOVE MY STUDENTS and my school. I just want to feel safe. I was never trained as a first responder and have no clue what types of protocols I should do in my classroom. Should my next purchase be a no-contact thermometer so I can check all my students before they come in? So many questions...
My husband and I have mapped a plan for what will happen every day when I come home from work. I will put all my items in a bin to be disinfected outside. Take off my shoes and go straight to the laundry room to put my clothes in the washer and jump in the shower. Do you think this is too much? Over the top? At least it is a plan and one that makes me feel a little safer. I wish the state had a plan for us that made us feel safer.
I urge you to consider changing our start date of school. Let us do more training. Let our schools get our ppe. Make plans that are uniform for all schools if we do have an outbreak (the state hasn't even sent us that yet).
We need more time. I don't know what the right date is, but I do know that starting on Aug. 4 is not the answer.
Mahalo
Take care--

Traci Rosario

Testimony BOE

From: robin wong <robinwongkauai@gmail.com> on behalf of robin wong
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha. I am testifying on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

First, let me say that I am a grateful and enthusiastic teacher, incredibly appreciative for my employment doing a job that I absolutely love. There is no greater joy for me than walking in to my classroom of freshman ELA students at Kauai High School with a well-prepared lesson that I know will inspire engagement with creative and critical thinking. My classroom is filled with laughter, wonder and connection; I cannot wait to get back to instruction!

Under the current circumstances, however, I am worried about and dubious of re-opening schools without an adequate plan for the following:

Disinfection of surfaces - I was told that I would only be responsible for cleaning my own personal work space and students would be responsible for disinfecting theirs, which I'd assume is the rest of the classroom (?) This does not sound reasonable or even entirely possible. Doors and door handles, walls, windows, book shelves, trash bins, paper, pencils & pens, pencil sharpeners, computers - who will be cleaning these surfaces and items between classes during school days? Are we really leaving the safety of the classroom to the kids?

Distance Learning Option - Our school opens to freshman students in 10 business days and teachers don't yet know if we are instructing full-time online students. Creating a distance learning curriculum from scratch - while we are not actually "on the clock" - to be ready for students seems unfair and worse, unrealistic. Teachers don't officially start back to school until July 29, at which time Admin books our first days with a professional development agenda, so when will we have time to come up with a fully remote learning curriculum?

Professional Development for Remote Instruction - Effective teaching is effective teaching wherever that occurs, however, a virtual setting challenges student engagement and teacher clarity. Most teachers have been trained for a classroom setting; not Zoom instruction. Schools in my district offered a two day (to be taken at your own pace) optional training but many teachers with families, summer jobs, other obligations could not attend. Teachers are bright, resourceful and committed but need time before the start of the school year to adapt to a digital framework and online tools. Teachers will have 3 days to completely change their instructional model; that's not good for the well-being of teachers or their students.

Equity - Will all our students have a working computer and reliable Internet that's been tested prior to the first day of school,only 10 working days from now? No. I had students during the 4th quarter of the last school year living in a County park with no electricity, let alone Wifi. Until our students are prepared to learn in an online environment - even part-time - teacher efforts are useless.

There is nothing I want more than to get back in my classroom and provide a quality education to my students, but we are not prepared to do this safely or effectively. Give us the time to prepare - with all teachers back from break - so we can develop a plan that keeps the community safe and allows our students to get the maximum benefit of learning during these challenging times. The investment may be difficult but the sacrifice will pay off for all of us in the future.

Robin Wong
Kauai High School
Freshman ELA
Kauai, HI
917-449-6311

Testimony BOE

From: K. 'Ilima Long <setolong@gmail.com> on behalf of K. 'Ilima Long
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; sentaniguchi@capitol.hawaii.gov; senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov; senkim@capitol.hawaii.gov; senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov; repwoodson@capitol.hawaii.gov; rephashem@capitol.hawaii.gov; repquinlan@capitol.hawaii.gov; boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov; repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay opening schools - from a public school parent

Aloha,

I am a parent of a student heading into the 5th grade at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Anuenue, an already under-resourced and under-spaced school. **I'm writing to implore you to delay the opening of public schools until we can guarantee the safety of our keiki, our students and our communities.**

I watched the press conference yesterday and I found it very disturbing. My child and family's safety and the safety of teachers is top priority. I am NOT concerned about my child's social development. I am not concerned about her academic development either.

Full and quality distance learning needs to be an option for all families so long as we remain in a pandemic. Until mass vaccination has happened, we need to have distance learning options.

It makes me so angry that the state is forcing our keiki to head to campus before our community is ready. **I also implore you to PRESSURE the Governor and the Legislature to release funds to extend and increase unemployment support, mortgage and rent freezes and any other measures to prevent the economic coercion that is forcing parents to have to work, making face-to-face schooling a stand in for child care.**

Lastly, if it's safe to open schools, it is safe for the BOE to meet in person and face the public on Thursday. So long as they plan to continue to open schools, please push them to have an in person meeting.

I understand you are in a difficult position. But parents across Hawai'i are not willing to roll the dice with our kids. I support all and will participate in all protest measures against the BOE and the state that is called by teachers or the mass of parents. Stop playing roulette with our keiki.

Mahalo

'Ilima Long
1448 Wilder Ave. Apt. 3
Honolulu, HI 96822

Testimony BOE

From: Shelby Stern <shelby.desilva@gmail.com> on behalf of Shelby Stern
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Shelby Stern and I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I teach 4th grade at Pohakea Elementary School and have been there for the past five years, the entirety of my teaching career. I absolutely love my job and I love working with my students day in and day out. My students and their education is of the utmost importance to me. However, what is also extremely important to me is the health and safety of myself, my students and their families.

In Ewa Beach, many of our families live in multigenerational homes. My students head home at the end of the day to homes that include their parents, siblings, aunties, uncles, and grandparents. Some of these students depend on their grandparents as their primary caregiver. It would be detrimental to that student's livelihood and mental/emotional health if they were to transmit COVID-19 to a vulnerable family member potentially resulting in death. I am truly so concerned about why we are rushing to reopen schools when case numbers are on the rise.

I understand that Hawaii is in a better place than the rest of the country, but this isn't a comparison contest. The bottom line is that we should NOT be opening if we have case numbers on the rise and when we are not getting clear guidance from the DOE and the DOH. The acceptable number of deaths is zero; there's really no wiggle room there. If there are deaths that occur due to reopening schools too soon that person is a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, son, daughter, etc. and that is honestly going to be a gigantic tragedy. That is a reality that I personally do not feel comfortable with...how can you be comfortable with that?

I am asking, along with many other teachers, parents, and students, that you push back the opening of school buildings. We need the proper training and we need much clearer protocols in place to make sure that each and every person who steps on our campus is as safe as possible. Please do not look at teachers as the babysitters or as the sacrificial lambs of our society. We are professionals and we are great at what we do. We want nothing more than to be there in those classrooms teaching our students, but we don't want to die doing that. Keep us safe, keep our students safe, keep our communities safe...push back the reopening of our school buildings.

Thank you for your time,

Shelby Stern
Grade 4 Teacher
Pohakea Elementary School
Ewa Beach, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Lauren Abe <lauren.abe63@gmail.com> on behalf of Lauren Abe
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hi,

I am testifying on action item: **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

I am a teacher at Mililani High School and have been closely monitoring the situation throughout the summer, checking my school email, and having meetings with my coworkers regarding this upcoming school year. I DO NOT think that schools are ready to open. I would really like you to please consider postponing the opening of all the schools because it is not safe yet. Especially with the covid cases rising daily, the schools and staff are not yet equipped to open on August 4. I just heard today that yes sanitizers will be placed in all of the classrooms at my school however it will not be here in time for the opening of the school year. I have two kids, one who is in elementary school and I do not feel comfortable sending her to school because there are just too many unknown factors and unknown answers to questions that have been asked multiple times. I myself who is on the list for having an increased risk factor am also not comfortable returning to school at this time. I am to the point where I feel like I am having to choose between my job and my life.

Thank you for your time and please postpone the opening of the school year.

Lauren Ching

Testimony BOE

From: jenningse001 <jenningse001@yahoo.com> on behalf of jenningse001
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please keep differential pay

Aloha and thank you for reading this email..

Please do not cut funding for teacher shortage differentials. All of the differentials have ptoven to retain staff and keep highly qualified teachers in our states most challenging positions to keep filled.

Thanks
Erik Jennings

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Jody Glickman <jodylynn.glickman@gmail.com> on behalf of Jody Glickman
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: delay the opening of school buildings to students!

To Whom It May Concern,
I am extremely concerned that we are opening for school on August 4, 2020. We are NOT prepared to do this safely! Our faculty and staff have not been properly trained to handle students with the new safety measures and protocols! We have been expected to keep ourselves updated during the summer when many teachers are not even checking their work emails. We have been asked to vote on models and meet with grade levels to prepare for the year, all on unpaid time! This is unacceptable and teachers WILL NOT be prepared to keep our students safe while effectively delivering content in an entirely new format. I implore you to delay the opening of our school buildings to students. We need time to prepare our work spaces to create a safe and healthy environment for our students and we need time to prepare for distance/blended learning.
Thank you!
Jody Glickman
Kihei Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Lucas Horton <hortonlucas740@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lucas Horton
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Special Education Extra Compensation

This email is in regard to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please reconsider and do not take away the differential pay for special education, hard to staff and Hawaiian immersion teachers. Teachers were promised this additional pay and it has proven to be successful in getting teacher to staff positions that were previously difficult to. It has been more effective than sending recruiters to the mainland and other strategies that the DOE has employed in the past. To take away this pay after teachers have taken these difficult to staff positions takes away the trust and good faith that teachers have with the DOE.

I have always believed that if you follow where money is allocated, you will see where priorities lay. By taking away the differential pay, the BOE and the DOE is showing that special education students, Hawaiian immersion students and students in poorer areas are not important. The DOE and BOE are saying that the quality of education these students get is not important. I hope this is not the case. Please do not take away the differential pay.

Sincerely,
Lucas Horton
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Anthony Arneson <aarneson@my.hpu.edu> on behalf of Anthony Arneson
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:55 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on action item H.

As both a parent of 2 high school students and a high school Social Studies teacher I beg you to delay the opening of our schools. Look at the mess all the other states who relaxed their social distancing are in right now. Many of these states are already announcing that they are going to teach virtually for at least the start of this school year. Currently Hawai'i is one of the least affected states but even our numbers are way up from where they were in April and May. Opening up our schools at this point is going to lead to super spreader incidents and tragic events which can be avoided by first training our teachers on teaching virtually and then providing this sort of instruction to our students.

Just look at the schools who wanted to get a jump on football a couple of weeks ago. Now several people and their families who never would have gotten this disease will now have to fight it and all of it's possible lifetime side effects. This is going to happen in our schools as well if we open them up to soon.

Please wait, I for one feel that there will be a mass exodus of teachers and faculty from our schools if the DOE decides to open the schools to soon. This is one topic/issue we should not be the leaders in. Please look at states like California and New York if they don't feel it is safe and fear what would happen if they were to bring their students back onto school campuses this fall, so should we. Just think what will happen when several educators come down with this disease no one is going to want to substitute their classes. Who is going to develop the lessons. Then what happens to the students in that educators classrooms? There are just so many question that need to be answered.

Imagine this one scenario, a single student in first period has Covid-19. They cough in the classroom and their mucus droplets land on another desk. Period ends and second period begins, two new students are now at these desks and now contract the disease. Now when they are contagious they do the same, by the end of a week half the school will be infected.

For the fall semester I believe we should teach our students virtually. I believe we should bring teachers back next week but to educate us how to properly teach in a virtual environment.

V/R

Anthony Arneson
Leilehua High School

Testimony BOE

From: Renee Obrien <msreneeobrien@gmail.com> on behalf of Renee Obrien
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, I am testifying on Action Item: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Renee O'Brien and I am a Special Education Teacher At Lihikai Elementary on Maui. I am asking that we delay the opening of school buildings to give us more time to plan and acquire the materials and supplies we need to open our schools safely.

We also need clarification and protocols that are detailed and consistent in order to return to schools safely. The questions that HSTA having been asking on our behalf must be answered and time must be give to ensure all safety measures are in place and followed with fidelity.

Thank you for your support in this very serious matter,

Renee O'Brien
Special Education Teacher
Lihikai Elementary
Safe Schools = Healthy Learning

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: julialdavison@yahoo.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Julia Davison and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school becausei I am an older at risk special education teacher who will be teaching two grade levels with multiple students coming to my resource room from 8 different reg ed classrooms. I have had no training in distance learning. Teachers need more time to learn and prepare. What kind of bubble is that? Thank you for the opportunity to send you my
Julia Davison

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Testimony BOE

From: Christina Hill <collegeinclusion@gmail.com> on behalf of Christina Hill
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differentials

Aloha, my name is Christina Hill, I work at Waipahu Intermediate as an FSC special educator. I am writing in regards to the Board's Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My husband and I are both special educators and for the last 6 years we had lived paycheck to paycheck, that is until we got the differential bonus. For the last 7 months we have been able to contribute to the local economy buying things we wouldn't have been able to buy otherwise, sending our oldest to LCC and we have been able to save, with the hopes of buying a home (further cementing our commitment to Hawaii public schools and the keiki we serve). We have three growing children and without this differential we will barely make ends meet once again. No public school teacher should have to live paycheck to paycheck. I ask you to please reconsider your action to discontinue differential pay for special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Pickard <mpickard@waimea.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Michael Pickard
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:13 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Michael Pickard. I am a second year teacher at Waimea Elementary School on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony to oppose agenda item G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please continue to provide the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to show that this BOE of Hawaii continues to value our hardworking teachers. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki and the future of our state economy. Temporarily discontinuing this compensation for this next school year will continue to impact our profession, communities and my family in these areas significantly.

The differential we received for the second half of this past school year made a tremendous difference in being able live a little easier financially. I know you hear many teachers are living paycheck to paycheck. It is still continuing even with the current differential we are receiving because I am one of them. I have four children, childcare, preschool tuition and a mortgage making it even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

Sincerely,

Michael Pickard
5th Grade Teacher, Waimea Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Wofford Wofford <roxybh15@hotmail.com> on behalf of Wofford Wofford
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:13 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of Schools

Good Afternoon,

My name is Brooke Wofford and I am a parent of three children in the public-school system in Hawaii. I have a child in Elementary school, Middle School and High School. I have sent an email about a month ago about my concerns of the school system opening up and have not gotten any reply. I am very concern with school opening up on August 4th, there are just so many unanswered questions about our children safety and not only our children safety but the teacher safety as well. I have been following everything that has been going on in the news, HSTA and DOE and I feel that the parents and the teachers are not being heard and no one is getting their questions asked. I think that school need to hold off on opening August 4th until question are answered and teachers are prepared and there is an action plan put into place. I am truly saddened by this whole situation. I am currently a student at the University of Hawaii in the teaching program and this is very discouraging that the DOE is not evening listening to their own teachers concerns. I get a lot of parents need to get back to work but the school system is not a child care facility but I also know it is also about getting the economy back but as a parent and as a future teacher here in Hawaii I am asking that the school start date be pushed back until teachers are well prepared and there is a stable plan in place and all questions are answered.

Thank you for your time!

Testimony BOE

From: Kainoa Arensdorf <kainoaa@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kainoa Arensdorf
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:13 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony 7.23.20 General Mtng.

My name is Kainoa M. Arensdorf, School Counselor at Mountain View Elementary School in the Keaau, Kau, Pahoa School District on the Big Island. I have gone to one voluntary meeting this summer at school to learn how prepared my school is for reopening. I was disappointed to learn that my Principal was told that each school will have to come up with their own safety protocols and procedures. Hand sanitizer 2as ordered for the school and it is on back order and may not be here in time for our start date. At this meeting, it was brought up that we don't even employ enough custodians to clean and sanitize our 9 acre campus multiple times a day. Please push back the start day for our schools, we need more preparation time to learn how to visually check our students' health, plan safe transitions throughout the school day with neighboring classrooms, and also prepare virtual, in person, and paper packet lessons for our students.
Mahalo for taking the time to read my statement for the 7/23/20 Genetal Meeting,
Kainoa M. Arensdorf

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Testimony BOE

From: BRIANNA VALENCIA <briannavalencia808@yahoo.com> on behalf of BRIANNA VALENCIA
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY!Action item H

(ACTION ITEM H)

Hello good afternoon! I'm sending this email because I have 4 children, two in High school ,one in Elementary, and one in Headstart.I fell that sending our children to school is not safe nor is it for the teacher's, right now it's so scary with the cases going up my kids are frightened and don't want to go and I fell they wouldn't concentrate knowing that they could get infected with the virus & to bring something home to family members,I myself have asthma & lung issues with two or my children. Please I ask that you guys really think about doing online distance learning until things look better for the safety of our community.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Holly Nakamoto <hsnaka13@gmail.com> on behalf of Holly Nakamoto
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding

To whom it may concern.

This is a testimony regarding: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Holly Nakamoto. I teach at Konawaena Elementary School. I have 3 children of my own. Two attend Konawaena High School and one attends Konawaena Elementary. As a teacher, as well as a parent, I have deep concerns about school starting on August 4. This pandemic is far from over and I don't feel we should use our schools, children and teachers as test subjects to see what happens. Teachers have not been properly trained and need more time to prepare for either safe in-school teaching or productive online teaching. I teach Kindergarten and I am still trying to figure out how I am going to keep those little 5 yr olds 6 ft apart all day long. It is not as easy as it sounds to just tell them to stay at their desks, face forward, and don't touch anything. Kindergarten just doesn't work that way.

Many families in our community live with grandparents and/or immune-compromised family members. How are we going to keep them all safe?

I miss teaching and I miss seeing my students at school every day. However, their health is so important to me that I feel we should postpone the start of school for students, until it is safe to do so.

Sincerely,
Holly Nakamoto
Kindergarten Teacher]
Konawaena Elementary
Big Island

Testimony BOE

From: Scott Fong <fongs006@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Scott Fong
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE Members,

Upon hearing the concerns and questions from today's HSTA press conference, I'd like to humbly ask that a postponement of in school learning take place. I totally agree that teachers need more time preparing for the reopening of schools and that our own State officials, especially the department of health and the superintendent needs more time to assure everyone throughout our school communities that there's a system of plans and procedures in place so that assurances from all stake holders can be felt upon returning safely to school. Too much is at stake and we need to look and learn from what has happened to other schools when reopening has occurred. Finally, it's easy to say reopen because the chances for infection looks small, until it happens to your loved one.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter.
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kristy <dkaspera@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristy
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay opening of schools to keep our keiki, teachers and school staff safe

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as an extremely concerned parent of two children in special education preschool, one of which has a respiratory issues and allergies. As mentioned in the HSTA news conference, young students don't know how to wear masks properly or to social distance, so it's vital that policies and procedures be put in place before everyone returns to the campuses. The health and safety of my boys is my first and foremost priority and If our teachers are scared, how do you think that makes parents and students feel? We have policies and drills for an active school shooting (at least in the mainland), so why is this treated any differently? And this has the potential to kill many more people and what will you say in the end? We didn't know what we were dealing with? You need to listen to the teachers who are on the frontline of this and delay reopening schools until there are proper procedures in place, and that all teachers will know how to teach distance learning.

Don't let this be a way for the State of Hawaii to try to be the first to reopen schools. That's a huge red flag that the BOE and Governor seem to be ignoring. If schools reopen, then what was the point of him doing the mandatory quarantine and stay at home orders? That will all be for naught in the end and you'll be sacrificing our children and teachers who already don't get paid enough. I don't know how you and the Governor can sleep at night knowing the train wreck that you are all setting up to happen come August 4.

I don't blame parents for leaning more towards homeschooling. You all need to communicate more with each other to work together to come up with valid and safe solutions, not just reassure the public with a false sense of security. No one's life is worth that type of social experiment.

I hope that you all will make the right decision. And you are now asking teachers to do more, yet want to cut their pay. You're endangering our keiki even more by taking away their chance for a decent education. It's no wonder more and more kamaaina are considering moving to the mainland.

Do what's right for all, not just yourselves. Think of the greater and highest good of all.

Mahalo,
Kristy

Testimony BOE

From: Tracy Brojakowski <tracy.brojakowski@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tracy Brojakowski
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Pay cuts for teachers

To : Board of Education ; State of Hawaii

My name is Tracy Brojakowski, I am in my 21st year of teaching Special Education at Lahainaluna High School. When I first started my teaching career at Lahainaluna in 1999 we had initiated a strike to get the attention of the State due to the poor teaching terms and conditions. We have been through furloughs , not having a suitable contract due to State lack of commitment to education throughout the past two decades. On top of all this we are considered one of the lowest-paid teaching communities in the United States, when figuring the cost of living.

Personally I have worked two jobs to pay back my student loans and continue to survive on the current teacher salary. I lost my second job in the service industry due to the COVID-19 outbreak and it leaves me in a desperate situation.

Teachers are considered essential workers during this pandemic.I have worked from home setting up digital classrooms, correspondence with my students and their families, taking part in on-going communication all day & night with other staff members to meet students' needs. This is a critical time for most families that do not have a support system. We as educators are there for these families to give them strength and hope during these difficult times.

It would be an atrocity to take this life raft down when needed the most. Please back us up and support all State employees.

Thank you,
Tracy Brojakowski
Special Education Teacher, Lahainaluna High School

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Testimony BOE

From: liberty furchgott <libertypoetez@yahoo.com> on behalf of liberty furchgott
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

RE:
Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

To the Board of Education Members,

I am writing you with regard to postponing the re-opening of our schools to students on August 4th. I am writing using two hats; that as a parent and that of a teacher.

As a parent of a student who attends Hilo High School I have great concerns regarding the reopening of school. I have received absolutely no information regarding what re-opening will look like, whether they will be on a modified schedule and what precautions with regard to hygiene and safety will be taken.

I am worried because as a parent making, what should be a simple decision to send my child to school, I am afraid that my decision could have a detrimental impact on her and our family. I need to know specifically the protocols that will be in place at her school. I need to know that there will be at least 6 feet of distance between her and peers, that masks will be worn and what types of sanitization will occur regularly on surfaces as well as what types of hygiene stations will be available for her to use. I need to know precisely how these things will be implemented at her school.

Having piece of mind before I send my child to school should not be too much to ask. This type of information should be readily available to parents, it should be written down and easily accessed so that parents can review it and make informed decisions about sending their children to school. Knowing this information will allow me personally to understand what other precautions I myself must put in place for her. I want her to return to school so badly, for her socialization, as isolation has been hard on her mental state (though she will not admit it) but protecting her physical health is equally important.

So for this reason, as a parent, I ask the board to postpone the re-opening of school until such logistical guidelines are written down concretely for all to see.

As a teacher at a different location, Honokaa High & Intermediate School, I have some similar concerns. Though our administration has tried to be proactive in creating a document to outline some of the procedures that will be in place, it too has failed to write out concretely and logistically how such things like mask wearing and sanitization shall occur.

In fact there was such vague written sections that I inquired with my administration only to be told that in fact such things as sanitizing would be the responsibility of teachers and possibly students which is in violation of our current MOU/CBA; and to have students do the sanitizing is beyond my comprehension since they are students, not custodians.

What I find most disheartening as a teacher is that with on-campus work commencing in eight days, that these very important logistical details are not yet set. For schools to re-open logistics are essential, and these details are lacking not only at my school, but at all Hawaii schools.

We cannot expect to re-open smoothly and safely unless these details are written out and agreed on by all stakeholders, but with about a week before our return this has not yet happened. So for these reasons, as a teacher, I am asking that the board postpone the re-opeing of our schools until such logistical guidelines are written down concretely for all to see, review, and determine how implementation will proceed.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter, the safety and health of our keiki and educators depends on our ability to have strategic plans clearly outlined, in place and ready to implement.

Mahalo,
Liberty Furchgott
Parent of student at Hilo High
Special Education Teacher at Honoka'a High & Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Cassie B Lamson <cassielams@utexas.edu> on behalf of Cassie B Lamson
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

My name is Cassie Lee and I am a 4th grade special education teacher currently teaching at Waiakeawaena Elementary School on the Big Island. I am writing on behalf of my concerns on Action Item H:
H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

https://hsta.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=31be4c2dbdddb0d80b4b4036a&id=8bca9b8f47&e=05c056c9a4

I am deeply concerned about many factors with the opening of school campuses to students and the lack of a clear multitiered health plan and educational plan.
My concerns:
1. How will students be assessed when they enter onto each campus and how will schools be equipped with enough staff and PPE to safely assess and deal with students who enter campus with symptoms of COVID-19?
2. What is the online curriculum meant to address?
3. What is the standardized protocol for all schools if a teacher becomes sick or tests positive for COVID-19? What is the plan for substitutes? I have a new baby and I will need to attend doctor appointments for him.
4. Why is the superintendent making statements about teachers getting training over the summer? I have had ZERO training from the DOE to address CODIV-19 virtual learning in online intrusion or creating online lessons.

There should have been clear literature on how students are being screened as they enter campus that is aligned with CEC guidelines and working with the Dept of Health.

There should be CLEAR literature on a continuum of services for all learning modes and when schools will have to shut down if there is an outbreak. There should be detailed plans to explain to community members, parents, and school employees how schools are going to run if there is a rise in “x” amount of cases. These decisions should have been made weeks ago to ensure that everyone has a plan in place and that time isn’t lost on instruction because teachers and administrators need more tone to plan. I strongly believe the DOE along with HSTA and the BOE should collaboratively find solutions to internet access for students and plan for full time online instruction so that we can keep everyone safe from COVID-19 until clear health and safety protocols can be created and implemented with consistency across the state.

As of today, July 21st, my school is still unsure about what online instruction will be for our students who are at home while the other group of students are on campus. There has been so training on online instruction and I am still unclear about how students will be screened as they enter campus.

Please place reopening the school year on pause until clear plans are created with all stakeholders involved. In the meantime, there needs to be more government assistance with childcare so that parents can return to work.

-Cassie Lee
cassielamsonlee@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: peter wulf <peter.wulf78@gmail.com> on behalf of peter wulf
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Openings

It is obvious that there is no clear plan for the reopening of schools. What Ige has said on 7/20 directly contradicts the HSTA statements made on 7/21. With no clear plan we should not risk the lives of children, as well as school staff. Delay the school opening.

Testimony BOE

From: Vehia Goo <vehia.goo@gmail.com> on behalf of Vehia Goo
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

Mahalo, for your faithful and prudent deliberations, as you strive to make a healthy educational environment for our communities during such a difficult situation. As an elementary school teacher at Likelike Elementary School, I have always seen my position as a first-grade teacher as a serious calling on my life to serve my community and not simply a job or means of income. This is why I would like to respectfully urge Catherine Payne, of whom I am a big fan, and the rest of the Board of Education to delay opening schools, at least long enough for us to train and prepare. As a Title I school, we are not yet able to provide our students with either in-person or distance learning without a great deal more support. We have not yet received the resources, the training, or the appropriate guidance necessary to engineer a successful learning experience for our students. Moreover, the campus cannot possibly be made safe enough to receive an influx of students by August 4th, given the current health crisis that our community continues to struggle with. For any plan to work in the short-term, an enormous effort to educate, train, and provide technology to our families from the low-income housing in my district would be needed. I do not doubt that the parent surveys you received so far did not include an adequate sampling of the parents of our most vulnerable students (low SES, ELL, etc.).

There are far too many questions unanswered and too many stakeholders who have not been included yet in your deliberations. I pray for you as you continue to lead our state toward a greater degree of normalcy.

Mahalo for your attention,

Vehia Goo

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Zuiderveen <maryz327@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mary Zuiderveen
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am responding to the Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.
My name is Mary Zuiderveen, I am a teacher at Waikoloa School on the Big Island and have been an educator for more than 40 years. Education is my passion. I, along with other teachers, worked hard this past Spring to continue educating our students (and ourselves) however distantly. It was really hard work. It was hard for us, for families and for students. Of course we would like to see schools return to "normal". We know that is not going to happen anytime soon. WE MUST NOT FOOL OURSELVES. This pandemic is far from over and we still know very little about it and the repercussions that will surely follow. It is wrong to subject ANYONE to Covid. We know that it is "more serious for older people and the risks for younger ones is relatively low". Does that mean if only a few teachers and students contract Covid it is okay? I cannot be a party to the potential risk of harming anyone.
As it stands, we have ONE WEEK to put a "safe" plan into place and figure out how we are going to teach as well. It is foolish for anyone to think that solving all the important safety issues and educational planning can be done in that period of time. There is no need to rush into mistakes. We need to postpone the start of school until there is a solid, scientifically-based platform we can truly stand upon. Please consider ALL the facts....we need to take this opportunity to make strong wise decisions. Our lives depend on it!
Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Amber <amber89nolan@gmail.com> on behalf of Amber
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Testimony for action item M.O.U. Between the state of Hawaii DOE and HSTA SY 20-21 response to COVID-19.

My name is Amber Takatani and I am a teacher at Baldwin High School. I, like many other teachers want to get back to school and start teaching our students. However, it needs to be done safely.

With the DOE pushing to reopen schools with no clear guidance is like driving with your eyes closed. Not only is there no guidance on how we are supposed to safely reopen schools but not all teachers got training on how to deal with situations such social distancing with thirty plus students in the classroom, students who don't want to wear masks, protective gear for teachers, cleaning classrooms between classes (since teachers are not expected to clean), lack of cleaning supplies, will providing protective gear to students who don't have them and will there be enough, virtual learning, for teachers who will not return to this profession and/or teachers who opt for telework, what happens to those students? The list goes on.

I understand our principals are working tirelessly to try and get their schools ready for students and staff with safety as their priority and I am truly thankful. However, if we all go back to school we would be endangering our communities. Many families are multigenerational, if one student is asymptomatic and brings it to school and spreads to other students and those students bring it to their multigenerational home, there is that potential for loss of a family member. This is gravely concerning. Please consider delaying the start of school.

Amber Takatani

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sharon Inouye <sharonminouye@gmail.com> on behalf of Sharon Inouye
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii BOE,

This testimony is in regards to Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please delay the start of school this year in order to allow enough time to properly prepare for a safe opening. I am a teacher at Moanalua Middle School and I am looking forward to having the best school year we possibly can. I took many webinars and read numerous articles this summer on my own time in order to see what resources and ideas are out there for distance learning.

However, we can't rush into this school year with so many important preparations not ready. Time is getting short and the whole state is not ready with vital statewide policies and plans which means that schools and teachers are not able to make effective plans which means that parents are hampered in making the best decisions.

Where are the 100% virtual education plans that parents are being offered? E-school is out so how does 100% virtual school work now? Where are the substitute plans for short-term and long-term leaves and how does it work if some teachers work 100% virtually from home due to health concerns? What are the emergency plans for when someone at school comes down with COVID-19? We would not want to operate without our numerous emergency plans and drills for fire, bomb threats, lockdowns, etc. but we are expected to start school without the most likely emergency plan to be needed: a coronavirus plan for when someone in our school ohana gets sick or someone in their household.

Please push back the start date so that we can all do our best to meet everyone's needs and to be a good example for our nation and the world that are surely going to watch us as the first U.S. state to go back to school.

Thank you,
Sharon M. Inouye

Testimony BOE

From: Dennis Takeshita <dennis.t.takeshita@gmail.com> on behalf of Dennis Takeshita
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:21 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Restart of School

To Whom It May Concern,

Over the last few weeks, I have become increasingly concerned with schools reopening in the upcoming weeks. Luckily, principals have taken the step to order PPE for teachers and staff. However, even taking this into consideration, the plan for reopening should be delayed.

Teachers and staff are not prepared. We haven't been provided the necessary training to start school. We haven't been able to adequately adjust to these new circumstances and to prepare for instances when we go back 100% remote. Districts around the country are taking the steps to ensure teachers are trained and fully prepared to do distance learning and to provide in person instruction, but the DOE has not done so effectively across the board.

I am a teacher and have been supporting my family with a covid case at home. This disease is no joke. The precautions and risks are real, and the DOE needs to protect everyone. Hawaii has one of the highest rates of inter generational households. When we go back to school, it doesn't just affect kids and school staff; it affects the entire community. Until we can reduce the transmission rate and take all the necessary precautions, schools should remain closed for in-person instruction.

I hope the Board of Education listens to those who will be on the frontlines and continue to advocate for what is right.

Sincerely,
Dennis Takeshita

Testimony BOE

From: MaryAnn O'C- Maui <maryannoconnell327@gmail.com> on behalf of MaryAnn O'C-Maui
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; MARYANN O'CONNELL
Subject: "Testimony"

Aloha BOE,
Please reconsider the opening of our schools July 29 for teachers and August 4th for students. **We need more time** to get the proper safety/protocols and training **before returning to our campuses!**
Four days before students arrive on campus is simply **NOT enough time** to train our staff and have the proper safety protocols in place. This is the amount of time given on a typical school year, NOT when we have a pandemic! We need much more time to prepare for online lessons and training sessions for our teachers to be prepared to teach our keiki with this new format of distance learning.
Our teachers as well as our keiki both **deserve a safe space** to work and learn in. Our teachers need to be trained properly to ensure safe practices are in place as well as training in new methods to be effective with online distance learning.
PLEASE DELAY THE RETURN OF STUDENTS/STAFF so the DOE can properly train the teachers for dealing with COVID-19 safety protocols, as well as proper training and collaboration time with colleagues to prepare for a SAFE ENVIRONMENT and student success.
We need guidance from DOH as to what the procedures will be when a case of COVID-19 occurs at our school. We need information provided based on the science behind the disease. **Please protect our keiki and our teachers!!**
PLEASE DELAY the reopening of schools, as it is not safe yet!
Mahalo for your time and consideration.

MaryAnn OConnell
Maui Middle School Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Susan Ryan <susan.ryan@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Susan Ryan
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; Cynthia Cruse
Subject: Testimony for pushing back the start of school year 2020-21

I am writing to encourage you to understand that the teachers of the state of Hawai'i are not prepared to begin the 2020-21 school year. Due to the fact that there has been poor communication with the parents regarding the option of Distance Learning, inconsistent safety protocols on school campuses throughout the state of Hawai'i, inadequate PPE (orders have been prepared and sent but due to the pandemic orders cannot be filled), inadequate sized classrooms for the number of students at social distancing requirements, NO training for teachers on Distance Learning, no training for substitute teachers when teachers are sick, no protocols developed by the Hawai'i State Board of Health and shared with the Hawai'i Board of Education and a pandemic we, the teachers of Hawai'i, are asking that the 2020-21 school year be opened at a later date. We will use this time to attend trainings on Distance Learning, trainings on safety and health protocols developed by the Hawai'i State Board of Health, and reconfiguring our classrooms to meet the safety and distance requirements of the BOE. Thank you for your consideration.

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Testimony BOE

From: dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com> on behalf of dorisa pelletier
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony -Schools need more time to reopen!

Aloha BOE members. This is my third letter to you all now, so let me just make it short and sweet. I am a mother and a teacher at King Kamehameha III School. My children go to King Kamehameha III and Lahaina Intermediate School. I am writing because I think you would be insane to open schools right now. I have had no computer platform or distance learning training; neither have many other teachers in Hawaii! We can't possibly deliver a great education by rushing this way. Even more importantly, I don't feel that the safety measures are nearly good enough for me to put my own children in school right now. Im thinking of homeschooling if we scramble to open up like this. If you will start school too early before clear training and plans are in place we will get our state shut down again! Thanks for your time, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Amii Pearce <a.pearce2016@gmail.com> on behalf of Amii Pearce
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

PLEASE IMPLEMENT A PHASED REOPENING OF THE SCHOOLS.

Schools need time to plan in order open safely and effectively.

We are not ready.
We need support, direction, training and the proper supplies.

If schools are forced to open face to face on August 4th, you are effectively placing educators at the helm of a sinking ship.

You have the power to fix this.

Mahalo,
Ami Pearce
Mother, Teacher and Community Member

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: De Austin <dezireenaustin@gmail.com> on behalf of De Austin
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:29 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

Honored Board Members:

I am a public school teacher on Maui, and am passionately committed to my profession.

I am concerned that limited information made available by HIDOE does not exhibit the same passion for commitment and care of our keiki, faculty, and staff at our schools.

These are unprecedented times and, as such, calls for unique action and bravery.

We must not be afraid to delay the opening of our schools. We must not be fearful of public backlash or outcry. Reasonable minds will prevail if we emphasize that it is simply better to start school and end school *healthy*, as opposed to compromising the health of our community.

Delay the opening of school to students so teachers can prepare for the safety of our students, our communities and for themselves.

Respectfully,

D Austin

Testimony BOE

From: Terri Smith <tsmith@inouye.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Terri Smith
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for B

I am a preschool special education teacher and I am writing to you to convey my concerns with returning back to school on August 4th. I feel teachers should be given more time (paid time) to prepare their classroom and receive the proper training to keep themselves and children safe.

I agree with the following statements from HSTA. There are many unanswered points of concern. I am especially concerned with my safety and health and well being so that I do not contract COVID. I would like more guidance on how to keep preschoolers safe from getting COVID. I feel I am at high risk because naturally young children do not know or understand about social distancing and are unable to take precautions on their own.
I am concerned about military families who may/may not self quarantine and unknowingly contract and/or are asymptomatic carries of the virus. Children do not take the same precautions as adults and can easily pick up the virus. I was alarmed at the insensitiveness of Dr. Bruce Anderson regarding the health and well being of the teachers and staff as he mentioned that children are low risk to getting sick with COVID but what about the teachers?
I need time to set up my classroom properly so that it will be safe for both me and my students. This requires packing up many materials to create space for social distancing. Changing out furniture to provide distance. Clear guidelines and proof of what 6 feet physical distance between all persons (both teachers and students) look like and how it can be accommodated. My administrator says 12 students can fit in my class and I'm not sure if this will be within 6 feet distance.

Will I be expected to teach face to face AND Distance Learning for my students. What kind of case load will special educator's have with IEPs, teaching face to face and planning for distance or blended learning with out adequate prep time and training.

Can we ask parents to phone/video conference with teachers
ONLY and keep them off campus and out of our classroom?

Can the educational assistants meet the children on the curb and watch them for pick up after school?

What type of workload will I have with blended, distance and face to face teaching? Already I am expected to do IEPs on my own time. Virtual IEP meetings keep me safe but take longer to prepare for.

I agree with the following points from HSTA

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HIDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?

- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Respectfully,
Terri Smith

Testimony BOE

From: Steph <steph_takashima@yahoo.com> on behalf of Steph
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

I am writing in testimony of Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**. I strongly urge you to delay the reopening of schools. I work at Kaiser High School as a counselor and I know many of the faculty and staff are worried and concerned about returning to school. We are concerned for the health and safety of our students, their families as well as our health and safety and our families. There are so many unanswered questions and very little guidance from the State, DOH, our school leadership, etc. of how to reopen schools safely even with a hybrid plan. Some of the guidance that has come out is contradicting and does not align with keeping everyone safe. Leaving it up to individual teachers to determine if masks or other PPE be worn in class shouldn't be an option. How will custodians be able to thoroughly be able to clean every classroom, especially at a high school? Why are we not allowed to temperature check students? What do we do for those students who have a medical condition and can't wear a mask? They should not be in school for their safety as well as the safety of those around them. Where is the confidentiality for those students? What and how do we respond to parents who want to have their child do 100% distance learning? How can our teachers do both? As it is, so many of our teachers put in an enormous amount of time preparing for their classes, now they have to be even more creative with even less time of how to deliver sound and rigorous content to all different type of learners. What is the plan of action when a student or teacher or staff member becomes infected with Covid-19? Is the teacher or staff member responsible for paying for that or using their own sick leave? What if a teacher or student does from this? What then? What about that student or teacher/staff member's family going to do? How will they feel? I have older parents in their 70s who I help and see 2-3 times/week. I feel uncomfortable going to work in unsafe conditions and visiting them and they get sick. These are just a few of the questions/concerns that come to my mind. There are many others that have yet to be answered as I'm sure my fellow teachers and counselors have as well.

I would imagine that I am not aline in wanting to be back on campus to support my students both academically and social emotionally. But I want us to be able to do it safely. Please understand that we have families as well. If it's not safe for tourism to continue right now or for lawmakers and others in our state to return to face-to-face conditions, how can you expect our teachers, staff and children to do so? Nothing is more valuable than a life.

Please take my comments, questions and concerns seriously. I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Takashima

Testimony BOE

From: Alex Sakaguchi <alex.msc@gmail.com> on behalf of Alex Sakaguchi
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:32 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony against opening schools prematurely

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alex Sakaguchi. I am a resident of Kea'au, Hawaii County, on the Big Island. I am writing to express my concern over the state's decision to push forward with the re-opening of public schools on August 4th.

I am a parent of 4 children, 2 of whom are in the public school system.

I am concerned that the state's plan will put innumerable people including children and faculty at risk prematurely. There are many unanswered questions for which policies need to be developed and shared before such a widespread opening should take place. As a parent, I want to feel that the state is/has taken every step to mitigate the risks of contracting/spreading COVID, and that there is an agreeable plan if/when such an event should occur. Currently, I do not feel we are there yet. Furthermore, the plans that are being articulated seem impossible to execute against. And despite reassurances from officials, one need only look at how effective the state has been with enforcing the 14-day quarantine restrictions for visitors to the islands. Hundreds of people are slipping through and disregarding those restrictions each day. It is clear we do not have the resources to enforce this restriction to the extent it needs to be. I would argue the same is true when it comes to opening schools.

For example:

- Will kids be forced to wear masks/face shields all day? According to this article, it appears no. https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/07/21/editorial/island-voices/column-reopening-schools-on-aug-4-is-a-misguided-rush-to-failure/?fbclid=IwAR2CEGdUjkjbv3iF1l1Xvn5g9AdgB0Tu6LURbJOr1TClXY8B2e4kNdiJ0vk
- If masks are not optional in stores and shops, airplanes, and other venues, why would they be in schools? And who will enforce this, especially with the younger children?
- If masks are not optional, what evidence can you share that highlights there are no adverse or detrimental effects from keeping a mask on all day--particularly with kids that might have existing respiratory challenges (i.e. asthma, etc.)? According to the American Lung Association "...prolonged use of N-95 masks in patients with preexisting lung disease could cause some build-up of carbon dioxide levels in the body."
- For kids with respiratory challenges already, wearing a mask all day may exacerbate their condition and potentially make it more difficult to fight off COVID should they contract it, which they will likely now be more susceptible to if given the option of not wearing a mask. What virtual learning option is being made available to these children?
- If a student contracts COVID, how will this situation be handled? Will they need to quarantine at home? Will their teacher and other students with whom they would have been in contact? Are there virtual learning options at that point?
- What kind of learning environment will be created in a classroom with zero interaction, mask policing, restricted activities, eating restrictions, etc.? Wouldn't it be better to just keep them at home? At least for the kids whose parents are able to facilitate this?

I would personally prefer an option that allows my children a virtual learning opportunity, rather than being forced back into schools before I feel certain that the proper precautions are being taken. What is being proposed has too many holes in it today. I feel we haven't struck the balance of health safety and learning yet. Erring too much on health safety creates a terrible learning environment. While creating the best learning environment compromises health safety. We haven't gotten this right yet, and I don't want my kids being guinea pigs to get there. Better we stay virtual until we're ready.

Mahalo,
Alex Sakaguchi

Testimony BOE

From: sara yamaguchi <sarayamaguchi2@gmail.com> on behalf of sara yamaguchi
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a secondary teacher testifying on action item:
H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. As schools are expected to open doors, I still have a few concerns. First, there is extremely little time that is allotted for teachers to prepare before students are expected to return. A couple of days on campus does not seem to be an adequate enough time to set up classrooms, prepare in classroom lessons and distance learning before students return. I have been a teacher for nearly a decade and my beginning of the year "To Do" list has never been this long.

Many teachers including myself have been working unpaid during summer break to prepare, but still I don't feel completely ready. Setting up distance learning requires a tremendous amount of time since it requires planning, scanning, uploading and recording videos for each lesson. I'm not sure how teachers will be able to handle all of this by next week and be ready to deal with all of the new safety protocols.

I applaud the efforts of my school administration and colleagues for the preparation that has been done. I can honestly say I feel more at ease being at our school compared to some other schools that have been struggling more with this whole process. However, I do wish there was more time for teachers to plan before students return. I believe this will lead to providing a better safer and learning environment for students under the circumstances.

Mahalo,
Sara Yamaguchi

Testimony BOE

From: alisyn blosser <alisynblosser@gmail.com> on behalf of alisyn blosser
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for continuing Differentials

Dear Hawaii's Board of Education,

Thank you so much for the differentials that were passed in January of 2020. As a teacher in one of the affected, hard to staff schools, it has been a huge blessing to receive the differential since January. It has made a big difference for me being able to continue to teach here in Hawaii. Hawaii has been my home for almost thirteen years, and at this time we still call it home. But in the uncertainty of these times, and also the financial costs of living here in Hawaii, continue to rise, I honestly have looked into what teachers elsewhere in other states that are close to family make financially, and it is significantly more. We do not want to have to move, and are planning on staying here, and the continued differentials will definitely help us to continue to be able to live here. I know there are budget cuts happening everywhere in the state. My hope is that as a state we can safely reopen and continue to fund all the positions in the state, including teachers, first responders, police officers, firemen, and life guards to name a few. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Alisyn Blosser
Kealakehe Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Donna D <donnadesq@yahoo.com> on behalf of Donna D
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern:

This correspondence is referencing

H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a teacher and a parent of elementary school aged students at Alakai O Kauai.

We are amidst a global health crisis.

I am concerned that there are no procedures in place that would ensure that we will not put all of us on Kauai at risk of this virus if we open schools now.

Hawaii has closed to tourists essentially, by extending a 2-week quarantine until September 1.

This shows we care about our communities.

But, we all have seen potential carriers of this virus NOT complying with this quarantine.

If someone at the school tests positive, it is not clear who has to quarantine and for how long.

What happens to that teacher whose school-age kids have to quarantine?

Are teachers expected to take their full sick days to quarantine?

On Kauai, there is a shortage of substitutes. And what sub would take that class?

There are too many risks right now.

Why not start school with an online program and keep Hawaii safe, as we have been doing thus far?

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Donna Daum

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Martin <konalizzi@gmail.com> on behalf of Lisa Martin
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School openings

To whom it may concern;

This testimony is in regard to Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

I'm a veteran school teacher with 25 years as a DOE employee. I am appalled at the reckless disregard the BOE has demonstrated toward the students and personnel who work in the schools. I love my students and I will do almost anything for them. But to ask me to risk my life (I'm in the high risk group) to teach them before our schools are physically prepared and while more cases appear every day is entirely unacceptable.

I cannot socially distance from most of my students. As a teacher of students who are visually impaired or blind, social distancing is not always possible. For safety I must remain within arms reach of most of them when they are walking on campus. I'm sneezed on and coughed on nearly daily. I work with students on nose wiping, feeding and toileting. None of which can be done from 6 feet away.

The latest research indicates kids between 10-20 are as likely to be carriers as adults. And children who contract Covid are at risk of that Kawasaki-like syndrome. Many of my students are medically fragile. Maybe most kids don't get coronavirus. But if these kids do, the outcome could be catastrophic. Yet the BOE is on every newscast lately assuring parents their children will be protected.

Last week Superintendent Kishimoto and Bruce Anderson publicly stated that the schools would be minimizing contact by forming "bubbles" so that if a person in one class is infected, it won't be passed to other classes. This is obviously untrue. All extracurricular activities are slated to begin 8/19. So...only 2 weeks of the "bubble"?

To open the schools at this point, with numbers increasing is unconscionable.

Yours truly,

Lisa Martin
District Teacher of students with visual impairments
West Hawaii Regional SPED

Testimony BOE

From: Tianzhen Nie <tianzhen.nie.19@tfacorps.org> on behalf of Tianzhen Nie
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tianzhen Nie and I am a secondary science teacher at Kamaile Academy. I am emailing to testify on: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

It is absolutely inconceivable that the Department of Education is pushing students to start school by August 4th, and wants the majority of teachers to be working on-campus again by July 29th. If the DOE were to look at the data of not only the rise of cases in the state of Hawaii but also nationwide, they would know that this is a hasty and underprepared plan. Indeed, the Florida teacher's union is suing the Florida department of education for opening up schools too quickly. Moreover, California's Department of Education has taken their rising number of cases into consideration, and moved all of their learning to distance learning in the past couple weeks.

Hawaii should take after similar measures, and if we cannot move all of our instruction online, at the very least delay the start of our school year. Firstly, Hawaii already starts our school year far earlier than most of our mainland counterparts, many of whom will not begin until the end of August and the beginning of September. Lastly, it is preposterous for the Department of Education to assume that teachers have the ability to do distance learning in any capacity, when many of our teachers have received very minimal training on these practices. Prior to the commencement of distance learning in the late spring semester, many teachers had not even used zoom before, much less engaged with the most common distance learning platforms of Google Classroom and/or Class Dojo (what was used at my school). We have received next to no training on online classes, and at my school which is a Title I school, I still don't even have my course maps for content alone outlined for the next school year, much less for distance-learning protocols. My school told us that they will be using BlackBoard learn for online lesson plans--however this information still has not been released to us over the summer to review.

This is in addition to me trying my best to put in UNPAID time over the summer towards my courses in the fall, all while balancing two other jobs. Meanwhile, our school has hosted only one faculty-wide meeting a week ago to give staff some updates regarding their coronavirus reopening plan, which thus far is far from sufficient in making sure all faculty and students are safe and that staff needs are getting met. The vast majority of questions raised to both the Department of Education and our school have not been sufficiently answered and peoples' fears have not been assuaged.

Ultimately, I hope that we switch to 100% distance learning in the fall, to keep all of our students and faculty safe. However, if that decision cannot be made immediately, at the very least it is extremely reasonable for us to delay the start of the school year so teachers have more time to plan and prepare themselves for either full distance or hybrid learning models, neither of which we are used to.

Respectfully,
Tianzhen Nie

Testimony BOE

From: Claire Ann A M Domingo <kaleapea@me.com> on behalf of Claire Ann A M Domingo
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha mai kākou,

I am Claire Ann A. M. Domingo, a teacher at Ke Kula ʻo Samuel M. Kamakau Laboratory Public Charter School for the past 2 years. I am also a parent of 3 boys who attend the school I teach at.

As a charter school Hawaiian Immersions teacher, we are NOT privy to this compensation from the second half of the 2019 - 2020 school year. ($4000).

I am advocating for my fellow kumu kula kaiapuni (DOE Hawaiian Immersion teachers) for the continuance of their extra compensation.
Hopefully in the near future, the Board of Education will recognized ALL kumu in DOE & charter schools to receive this compensation.

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.

Na'u me ka ha'aha'a,
Claire Ann Kalaunuola Domingo
Kindergarten teacher @ Ke Kula O Samuel M. kamakau
Parent of Kaiao, Kauha'anui, Keao Ku'ikahi, students at Ke Kula ʻo Kamakau

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Christine Bush <christine.bush@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christine Bush
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:38 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Agenda Item VI-D

RE: BOE Meeting, 07/23/2020
Agenda Item VI-D
Christine Bush, Math teacher, Waipahu Intermediate School

My position on opening up public schools on July 29 for teachers, and August 4 for students is that we are not ready for in-person classroom instruction yet. There are so many variables, unanswered questions, and ambiguous directions from the top down. The word "training" has been used so much lately, as in, teachers need more time for training. Training for what? This is the million dollar question, and no one, it seems, is listening. This does not say anything about what we really need. We need to feel support from the DOE; we need to hear logical plans from the DOE; **WE NEED TO BE HEARD.**

- If adults cannot abide by a facemask mandate, what makes you think that the children will?
- Children do not follow good hygiene protocols in normal times; what makes you think they are going to ramp up their hygiene practices now?
- What about the subs? If a teacher calls in sick at my school and cannot get a substitute, our principal has teachers fill in during their opt-time. This means that teachers will be subjected to more students and contact tracing becomes impossible.
- What about the school buses? Recesses? Lunch? These situations are totally out of our control.

I have way too many concerns and fears to list at this time, so I will end with these three:

- There is so much testimony pleading to postpone the opening of school. Why is the DOE refusing to acknowledge public outcry?
- Kishimoto talks about an "Ohana Bubble." **WHAT**? What kind of Ohana throws their teachers and children to the wolves. What kind of Ohana disregards, or rather, flat out disputes the testimony from the elders in the tribe?
- And finally, why is the DOE in such a hurry? Yes, I understand what was said about opening schools before Ige opens the State 9/1/20. But we are talking about lives at stake, especially for older teachers, like me. Teachers need time to prepare for the inevitable disaster coming our way if we open too early. We need solid plans **in place** that address ALL possible situations, including plans for the imminent shutdown. Most teachers do not have a solid distance-learning curriculum in place, thus we would be back to the disastrous 4th quarter 2020.

Again, please, what is the hurry? My mother, God rest her soul, always said, "Haste makes waste!" Please listen to the frontline people, **We the TEACHERS.**

Sincerely,
Christine Bush
Math Teacher
Waipahu Intermediate School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kristen Kimura and I am a seventh grade teacher at Washington Middle School as well as a mother to a first grader at University Laboratory School and a one year old child. I am a single mother and am unable to financially provide for my children and maintain insurance for my family without my job, but I am also terrified of returning to school. I have spoken to my financial planner and have made plans for my children just in case anything should happen to me. Being forced to choose between my profession and my family is a devastating choice and I'm not sure that my profession will win.

All of the teachers I have spoken to are scared to return to school but feel they are not being given any other option but to go back to school. We have no idea what new protocols have been put into place. What are we being asked to expose ourselves and our families to? How many students will we have in a class? How will the kids move on campus? How do we take care of a child or staff member who may fall ill? What will it take for the school to close? What happens to us if and when we get sick? What happens when all the cleaning supplies run out and teachers are not able to buy them with their own money because these items cannot be found in stores or online? Can a substitute take over the demands of a regular school teacher during this time period? What happens to our students if all of their adult family members fall ill? How do we successfully move to online learning? How will the students be able to adjust to the new responsibilities and technical challenges they will face? I watch the news and check social media constantly but have not been assured that there is a solid plan by the superintendent, the DOE, or the BOE. This is not to say that no one is working on addressing all of these issues, but things are constantly moving and changing so that all the best laid plans need to be readjusted.

Several news articles have said that the virus is airborne and that young people seem to be largely asymptomatic or have minor symptoms so that it is difficult to recognize when a child is infected. They have also indicted that children between the ages of 10-19 seem to be carriers and easily spread the disease. Children in middle school thrive on being social and testing boundaries and think inappropriate actions are funny. I worry that they will not take all of our rules and precautions seriously.

Even schools in other countries and the summer programs here have not been successful in keeping everyone safe despite the very strict measures that they have put into place. Although it doesn't appear that children are that affected by the disease, no one really knows because the schools have been closed and many parents keep their children at home. The reopening of small businesses alone has increased the volume of people that tested positive and that should be looked to as a model for how the case numbers will increase with schools reopening. We closed schools when numbers were low so it makes no sense to open now.

I have also not spoken to any parent who is not concerned about going back to school this year. My daughter is very young and little children will find it very difficult to social distance, keep their masks on for prolonged periods of time, not touch their faces, or wash their hands or take proper hygienic precautions. Her bubble is supposedly around 20 children which is frightening, but then again my bubble will be about 130. Kishimoto stated that Distance Learning was an option for parents, but every parent I've spoken to who has checked in with their schools have said that the children could only be pulled for home schooling if we were worried about our children being exposed. If parents are willing to take on the responsibility to ensure that their child will participate in distance learning and it decreases the population we are working with, I don't know why this isn't a viable option.

There is just so much more to say and it would be impossible to address all of those concerns in this email. I will end by saying that prisoners were released from jail because the state didn't think it was safe for them, but then the state is asking us to risk our lives, our families' lives, and the lives of our children instead of delaying the reopening of schools until we are trained and feel like we can do our jobs safely.

Please consider delaying the reopening of schools or trying to roll out virtually until more precautions are put into place and shared with the entire school community.

Kristen Kimura

Testimony BOE

From: Eric Schrager <peschrager@gmail.com> on behalf of Eric Schrager
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:39 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha!

My name is Eric Schrager and I am writing to the BOE General Business Meeting in support of a "Phased" Reopening of schools this fall. The movement from one phase to another should be determined only by the level of COVID-19 disease spread and should solely be based on health and safety concerns, not on the impact that in-person school closures has on our economy.

Specifically I endorse three main Phases, all of which must include an option for parents to keep their kids at home and be provided full online schooling conducted by real teachers.

Phase I should last from 30-45 days and be Fully Remote with no option for in-school learning.
Phase II should be a hybrid with 2 days optional in-school per week and the other 3 days all remote.
Phase III should be a return to in-school instruction but with the option of remaining fully remote based on the families‘ wishes.

In this way we will be able to carefully determine the impact of each change and avoid any potential outbreak in a school. So, for example in Phase II, if a school has a student test positive then the impact will be on less than half of the other students and staff, than if we just open the schools completely right away.

I feel it is critical to always allow families the option of fully remote school because each family situation is different. My kids have all graduated but one of them is at higher risk and I would hate to have had to make the choice of him either not getting an education or risking a serious illness. That‘s just not a choice our families should have to make.

My greatest concern is for our teachers, their families and the families of our children. Although it has become clear that COVID-19 generally has little (known) impact on children in the near term, we simply don‘t yet have the information about how the disease spreads among children that we need in order to make good decisions. Additionally, we don‘t know the long-term impact of the virus on the human body. Until we learn more I strongly support the phased return to school as outlined above in order to mitigate the risks about which we are currently aware.

Mahalo!

Eric Schrager
Ewa Beach

Recommended Phased In Reopening

The movement from one phase to the next will be dependent on monitoring the spread of COVID-19 as well as health and safety guidance.

PHASE 1: FULL REMOTE LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar, will begin school on August 17, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar, will begin school on September 1, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- No students in the school buildings. All instruction will be delivered virtually.

PHASE 2: HYBRID LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
    - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
    - Students learn online outside of school 3 days a week.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
    - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
- Students will rotate between face-to-face and virtual instruction.

PHASE 3: FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING (VIRTUAL OPTION)

- When safe, all students will return to in-person instruction with a virtual option.
- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further health and safety guidance.

Testimony BOE

From: Gavin Jardin <jarding@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Gavin Jardin
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am emailing you all in regards to the reopening of our schools. I am a Physical Education teacher at James Campbell High School. Although I miss all of my students and the social interaction, I do not feel that it is safe to open up school; for the students and staff. There's a lot of unanswered questions and you expect us to feel safe at work without even being given the answers. This isn't right. It is said that we were given the proper training for re-opening during the Summer when we were not. Who is "We"? When are we supposed to get all of our PPE supplies? Are we supposed to supply those ourselves? How do we monitor students during recess/lunch? If a student does not have face covering, and we do not have an extra one, what do we do then? If a student tests positive for COVID19, and they were in our class, does every single student/staff who was in contact with that child need to be quarantined for 14 days? What about the teachers? Do we need to quarantine for 14 days? Does that 14 days come out of our sick leave? What if I get sick after the 14 day quarantine and I don't have any sick/personal days left to use, what then? Am I supposed to take leave without pay? At James Campbell High School we have 5 Physical Education teachers. During one period, we will have 5 classes sharing the locker rooms at a time. How is this safe? There is no way that social distancing can be practiced if we do not have enough space on campus. 8 days are left until you expect teachers to report to school and you still have not answered the many questions that we have. You are putting us teachers into an unsafe environment when you are well aware of the risks. The risks do not outweigh the reward in this situation. You have the opportunity to keep the number of COVID19 cases down in the state of Hawaii by keeping schools closed and have it be 100% distanced learning. Make the choice that is PONO!

Respectfully,
Gavin Jardin
JCHS Physical Education/Team Sports

Testimony BOE

From: John Johnson <john@onebreathphoto.com> on behalf of John Johnson
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:42 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do NOT reopen yet

I am writing to implore you not to reopen the schools just yet. I have two kids in school and am considering home schooling since BOE is not anywhere close to being ready to reopen. I implore you to wait an extra month and get the details and plans ready. I don't care if the year shifts a month, it's better to do that than bury teachers and students.

Malama Pono,
John Johnson
Mo'ili'ili

Testimony BOE

From: karine <kariney@gmail.com> on behalf of karine
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony school

Hello Board members,

I oppose the opening of schools on August 4th.

I am a special education teacher for preschool students. I hope you will hear the plea from teachers who do not feel safe, who do not feel their students will be kept safe . We are the ones with the students. We are the ones who will be affected, not those who sit in their air conditioned office safely distanced from others. We are scared. I have been asking for support and guidance since the school has closed. I have NOT received any training or guidance.

I am scared to return to work. I come into contact with body fluid daily. I change diapers, do toilet training, feed, wipe away tears, and talk and interact with these little ones. They cannot wear a mask. I have had feces, urine, saliva and boogers spew on me. I don't think a simple face shield, mask, and gloves will fully protect me and my students. However, I am told this will keep me safe. I do not feel safe. While others will be distanced 6 feet apart, how do I and my students do this? We can't.

As for the "bubbles" Dr. Park talks of, how do I keep my classroom bubble small and safe? My students receive speech and occupational therapy, one student has a one to one person that is with him all day. That will be three additional people coming into my classroom besides myself and my education assistant. Two of these additional people will be working with other students throughout the day and week- creating overlapping bubbles. There is no safe bubble.

Superintendent Kishimoto talked of the positive feedback she got for summer school. Can I point out that these classes are smaller? For instance, my school had 2 students in their summer class.

I help take care of my elderly parents with underlying health issues, who are former educators and administrators. I also have two children at home. I am so worried for my family, I decided not to send my son back to his public school. My other child requires child care, which I am hesitant to send him to.

I understand people want the schools open, believe me, we became teachers to help and enrich young minds. We miss our students, we miss our classrooms. However, we did not sign up to be sacrificial lambs. Please push back the start date for schools. We need to be trained, have a safe and clean room for our students and ourselves, have a plan for our school and class. We need time to be given directions and to feel comfortable.

I hope you can hear and see my concerns as a teacher and parent. Thank you for taking your time to read and hear my concerns.

With kind regards,
Karine De Lima
Special Education Teacher and parent

Testimony BOE

From: jkkubota@hawaiiantel.net
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony-Teacher Shortage Differenctials

Aloha,

My name is Joy Kubota and I'm a !st grade teacher at Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School in Lahaina, Maui. I am submitting this testimony to request that funding be continued for teacher shortage differentials. I work at a school in an area that is hard to staff. This funding is crucial not only to ensure our staff remains consistently the same, it is also crucial for myself as one of the many who have to make the daily commute to and from school which is almost an hour away from my home.

The pandemic's effect on the cost of goods and services has made the cost of living here even higher that it already is. As a caregiver to my elderly/disabled mother, it is even more important to have that added funding to offset the cost of her care. To retain good quality teachers and allow those such as myself to continue to work and provide quality care for my mother, please continue the funding that is needed provide teacher shortage differentials and look at other options to address the shortfalls.

Mahalo,

Joy K. Kubotq

Testimony BOE

From: uilani macabio <umacabio@gmail.com> on behalf of uilani macabio
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I'm U'ilani Macabio, and I am a teacher at Honoka'a High School. I am writing this email to state my opposition on agenda item G. I feel that as teacher, who is, a key figure in the positive supports and growth of the up coming generations of Hawaii. We need to always take the time to plan and provide extra support during or after school hours for these youth. This is even more so in the rural area that I work in, because of the lack of resources, programs, and funding. This new provide income for hard to fill area has provide somewhat of a finacial relax on myself, a single mother, with two children. Because of this extra compensation, I can focus more on creating better and improved content, and not work two or three jobs. Please think of the impact you are doing not only for the teachers but the students. The ripple effect that we will see will be detrimental to the teachers, the students, the school, and the community.

Thank you for your time,

U'ilani Macabio

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Valadez <jessiwyn@me.com> on behalf of Jessica Valadez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: What About Teachers Own Children?

How can we return to our campus 5 days a week if our own children can only be on their own campus 2 day per week? Will you offer to babysit for free because I have to work to pay for daycare With the current situation. Many wonderful teachers will be forced to quit to accommodate the insanely different school schedules offered right now.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: sarah <sarahstone316@yahoo.com> on behalf of sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:47 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools should not be reopening

I'm writing to you as a concerned parent. I have 2 children in Hawaii Doe schools in Pearl City. My daughters school is the ONLY school in the whole district planning to open face to face every day. This is highly alarming to me. My daughter has spent the last year dealing with breathing issues. We are currently still undergoing treatments to even figure out what it causing it. I can not afford for her to catch Covid19. I do not feel comfortable sending her into a classroom that is too small without social distancing procedures to begin with. I also have worked at the school for the past 5 school years so I'm very familiar with the classroom size of our school. Many of the children that attend our school are military families, this is important because our so called "Ohana bubbles" are huge. My husband works in a building with hundreds of other members some of who have tested positive for covid 19. There is no way possible that opening face to face everyday isn't going to lead to increased cases of covid 19 just due to the places parents go for work. I can't risk my daughters health and send her to school every day with the full school in attendance. That to me is a ticking time bomb. Kids, especially elementary level kids don't understand the meaning of social distancing. There's going to be the ones that are going to joke and make other kids feel uncomfortable like oh watch out, I'll give you corona. You'll have the kids that lick other people's things, and stupid things like that kids do. The teachers are unable to control all the kids in their classrooms without a pandemic to deal with so I surely don't see how they'll be able to keep everyone safe during. The cases continue to rise and are at levels far beyond what they were in March when schools originally closed. Please look at this data and make the decision to postpone the face to face reopening until it is safer for our keiki and our teachers. A small academic setback is worth even just one life saved.
Concerned Parent,
Sarah Whitehurst

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: katreinagamil@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hi,
I am a teacher and parent of an incoming kindergartener at Ka'imiloa El and I do not feel that the teachers and schools of Hawaii are ready to open up yet. We need the time to prepare ourselves to best teach our students and effectively use the new platforms and strategies we have yet to learn because this is new to all of us. Even teachers who have been teaching for years have not prepared for anything like this. We will not be effective without the proper training and guidance. We also need to better prepare our schools to make it safe for all students and staff. Admin teams have been working overtime to find their own way to prepare the schools but with little support from the state and DOE. I love my school because our staff and leadership have always been amazing with advocating and accommodating for our keiki but we are not ready.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Hana Mauldin <hanamauldin@gmail.com> on behalf of Hana Mauldin
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:48 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE,

My name is Hana Mauldin and I'm a kindergarten teacher at Mt. View elementary on Hawaii Island. I am writing in regards to **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

I ask you to please reconsider opening our schools to our students on Aug. 4th in order to give us more time to prepare. Our administration has been working tirelessly over the summer to plan for this year but guidance and policies keep changing. We need clear guidance in order to keep our schools and community safe. We have not had school wide training, anything that was done over the summer by teachers was voluntary. I am concerned about providing in class and quality online instruction as my school will be following a blended model.
I have several other concerns:
1. Will there be enough subs as we are not to report to work when we feel sick?
2. Will we be blamed if a student becomes ill from school?
3. We need clear procedures for meals and recess with guidance
4. We need training and proper PPE. Many teachers have already purchased their own equipment with our own money.
5. How will our rural families get internet access when providers don't cover their areas? Some students are expected to spend 2-3 days online but have no internet.

I, like so many others have many more questions and concerns. School are much more than child care. We know how essential our roles are to the community. Please give us time to prepare properly.

Thank you for your time,
Hana Mauldin

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Parpart <lparpart@yahoo.com> on behalf of Laura Parpart
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Differential Pay for Special Educators

July 21, 2020

Providing Testimony for : Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year

From: Laura Fernando – Special Education Teacher at Mililani Middle School

I have been extremely grateful for the differential pay for special educators starting late last year. I have a daughter in college and am a single head of household earner due to my husband's passing in September 2018. I was a substitute teacher for 14 years while my husband was alive, but am now a full time special education teacher due to being the sole provider for my family. The differential pay has been very helpful and I personally work every weekend on school work/IEP meeting preparations and feel that this differential pay is well deserved. I know times are more difficult now with the covid 19 situation, but I would like to testify that the differential pay continue to be given to hard working special educators and other personnel who have been receiving these funds.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Laura Fernando

Phone: 808-223-4167

Email: LParpart@yahoo.com

Testimony BOE

From: Melanie Garde <melanie.garde@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Melanie Garde
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential Pay

I hope that the legislature will continue to support the differential pay. Not just because of this unprecedented time, but Hawaii in general is a high cost living area and the residents are struggling to keep up with the economy as is. Please please do not cut the differential pay. Thank you

Melanie L Garde
Lahainaluna High School
Student Service Coordinator/SPED Department Chair
(808) 662-3979 x238

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Testimony BOE

From: D Z <d.zambrano0824@gmail.com> on behalf of D Z
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Delmy Zambrano and I am a Special Education Teacher at Mililani Ike Elementary School.

We cannot open school campuses to students on August 4th as teachers across the state are not prepared. Teachers need in school time to develop a curriculum to adhere to new guidelines. Since at any given moment schools can close and teachers will be conducting distance learning, there needs to be explanations and clear plans to follow in the event of this situation to occur. The number of live cases are rising, and we need to keep the safety of our students, teachers, and staff in mind. This is a process that cannot be rushed. Many of us miss our students and want to return to normalcy but sadly we are in the middle of a pandemic. That has not changed, so we need more time to better prepare ourselves for the safety of our community.

Thank you.

Delmy

Testimony BOE

From: erin o <erin.okamoto@gmail.com> on behalf of erin o
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Erin Okamoto, and I am a parent of three children, two of which attend public schools here in Hawaii. I am writing with my testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on MOU between the BOE and the HSTA related to Covid-19. As a parent, I am beyond worried for the health and safety of my children and my family.

My children have spent the better part of the last four months at home or at the park, in the open with more than 6 feet of distance between them and the next person. I have received their school's reopening plan, and nothing is making me feel safe. I am still being asked to supply the school with clorox wipes, hand sanitizer, and paper towels. Where do you suggest I get this for my own personal use, much less to give to a school? If we can't bring it to school, who will provide it? What will lunch look like when my child is taking off their mask and most likely to contract germs? What does recess look like? How do I know everyone else at school has quarantined and kept safe when military families are allowed to get off the plane and skip quarantine? Do military bases not have quarantine? I recently flew from DC with a stopover in Texas, one of the hottest spots in the country, and saw military families get off the plane and skip quarantine. How did you determine they are not carriers just because they are military?

What is protocol when one student is diagnosed? Why are the fellow students not notified they have been in contact? Does the whole family then have to also quarantine with the student?

My children recently found out their grandpa was diagnosed with Stage IV Lung Cancer. He was not a smoker and he has been the one picking them up from school every day of their lives. Now they are afraid they will never be able to see him again because there is no way to ensure their safety while in school. It is also clear teachers have not been trained to be effective in distance learning, and this is not their fault.

Frankly, there are far too many questions and loose ends. There are too many assumptions being made on the part of the State with our teachers and students being the guinea pigs. I want to know there is plexiglass, PPE, disinfectants, sanitizers, procedures, and everything a hospital would have. You don't see doctors in hospitals spending 7 hours in one room making sure a patient doesn't get any worse, why are we putting kids in one room for 7 hours?

We are in the 21st century and distance learning is feasible. You have an entire eschool to prove it. I already know by electing to go online full-time, my child will not have the attention of any teacher. But if every teacher is online, I know she will get what she needs. Make the right choice for our kids. I beg you.

Erin Okamoto

Testimony BOE

From: Kau'i Ontai <kauiontai@gmail.com> on behalf of Kau'i Ontai
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Kau'i Ontai and I am a grade level counselor at Kahuku High & Intermediate School.

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

Please do not open school campuses to students on August 4th. We are not prepared!!!

The HIDOE and Governor Ige seem to be forgetting that teachers are currently on summer break. All school-level meetings offered over the summer have been voluntary. Teachers are not required to attend these meetings (virtually) and there is no compensation provided. Teachers are also not required to check email during the summer as there is no compensation for staying connected while on vacation.

The message by HIDOE and Governor Ige is misleading!!! There has been NO TRAINING at all regarding the return to school.

The official start date for teachers is next week Wednesday, July 29th. Return protocols for faculty and staff have not even been addressed let alone protocols for the return of students.

To date, I have received no assurances that the safety protocols outlined in the MOU will be met at the school level. I have no understanding of what it will be like to return to campus next week Wednesday and I am deeply concerned.

I have received a letter from my Principal outlining the opening of the school year schedule. It reads (in part): "Everyone is expected to report physically to campus, however, can join the scheduled meetings/trainings virtually while on campus (a remote sign-in procedure will be shared at the first Staffulty meeting)."

July 29th: TEACHER DAY
-Sign-out key, set-up classroom/office, pick-up computer, etc.

While I appreciate the communication and information, the return protocol is not addressed. Our first Staffulty meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 30th. What is the remote sign-in procedure for the first day? What is the procedure to sign-out my key?

If safety protocols are not clear for facutly and staff, how can we expect that they will be clear for students??

Please delay the opening of schools to students until all schools can meet the demands in the MOU.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
-Kau'i Ontai

Testimony BOE

From: Kari Stagno <kari.stagno@gmail.com> on behalf of Kari Stagno
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Kari Handley and I am a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Special Ed.) at Lehua Elementary School in Leeward District on Oahu.

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

On July 1, my school faculty met voluntarily to vote on which model we would implement in the reopening of school buildings. After much discussion and weighing the pros and cons of each model, we ultimately decided that we would move forward with Model A, Full Face to Face, due mostly to our school enrollment being strikingly low, currently. In the weeks that have passed since then, many things have changed. There have been an increasing number of cases of COVID-19 reported (statewide and nationwide), some specifically of children. It was previously thought that children were safe from catching and spreading COVID-19, but we now know that is not true.

As much as we want to see our students in person everyday, I have to question whether or not it is safe to do so. And if schools are ready to reopen their buildings on August 4. As teachers, we have just 4 days to prepare for the opening of the school year which will be sure to prove like no other before. This will be the start of my 16th year teaching, but it feels like my first. What will happen when a student or staff tests positive? Will our school close down entirely? What is the plan? Where is the guidance to reopen buildings from the Department of Health? What happened to the DOH policy that schools would remain closed until 4 weeks of no new cases?

Just yesterday we heard that the DOE will now offer FULL DISTANCE LEARNING to all students if parents do not feel safe sending their child back to school, regardless of the model the school is implementing. As a Special Ed. teacher, I'd like to know what that means for our Special Ed. students? If one of my students elects for this option, how will I be able to provide specially designed instruction for this student, while meeting face to face with my other students everyday?

School buildings are set to open 2 weeks from tomorrow. 2 weeks. The DOE has had all summer to come up with a plan and roll it out. Why has it taken so long to do so? Why have they waited? Teachers are planners. Long-term planners. This does not sit well with us. The DOE has said they've offered training. I have not been informed of such. We are not ready.

I implore you to reconsider opening school buildings on August 4. Delay the opening and give us time to be ready and safely reopen for the health and safety of Hawaii's students, teachers, and school staff.

Thank you,
Kari Handley
Lehua Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Jeremiah Ellard <jeremiah_ellard@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jeremiah Ellard
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please reopen schools to in person learning

Aloha, I am a sixth grade teacher in Lahaina and I want to encourage you to vote to open schools to in person learning. Our keiki suffer from more than just a loss of learning when schools are closed or provide only virtual content. The low case numbers in Maui do not warrant the drastic measures and paranoia that the HSTA is promoting.

Get Outlook for Android

Testimony BOE

From: Donelle S <donelle.sakuma@gmail.com> on behalf of Donelle S
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Hawaii State Teachers Association
Subject: testimony

Aloha kākou,

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

My name is Donelle Sakuma and I work at ʻĪao Middle School on Maui, 6th grade Study Skills teacher. I also have two children of my own at Pōmaikaʻi Elementary School.

As a teacher and a parent during this pandemic, I am concerned that the teachers are not prepared to effectively teach and meet the needs of our keiki through distance learning opportunities. In order to give them the best possible education during this time it is extremely important that this process is not rushed and that our teachers receive the proper training and preparation.

Please consider pushing back the start date for students and be willing to provide quality professional development for our kumu.

This is an excellent opportunity to come together as a community and support each other. We have the chance to build an educational system where despite political, health, and economic hardships, our keiki can still prosper and receive every bit of education they deserve.

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

Donelle Sakuma

Testimony BOE

From: Joyce Evens <joyce.evens@gmail.com> on behalf of Joyce Evens
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I would like to support the movement of postponing the return of students to schools. I am a 35 year Waimea High School teacher in Waimea, Kauai, Hawaii, and I am 63 years old.

Yes, I miss school, and yes, I miss the students. These are two reasons why I have not retired as of yet. However, I have never in my 35 year teaching experience felt so ill prepared and apprehensive for a school year to begin.

This is an extraordinary situation and it must be looked at with the respect that it deserves; that it will take extraordinary measures to resolve it. These measures include more preparation time for teachers before the students return to campus.

I have been following the mask covering, and six feet social distancing to its fullest extent. I have not even been to Costco or Walmart since March. But if I did go to these stores, I would not be spending six hours there. But now you are stating with little or no preparation, I should be in a classroom with 80 different students who have an infinite family connection line. This is simply not a good decision.

I am not supporting the idea of 100% online classes or closing schools, but I am supporting giving the teachers some additional preparation time before encouraging the students back to the classroom. And by the way, I did just complete my will.

Thank you.

Joyce Evens
joyce.evens@gmail.com
808.651.0843

Testimony BOE

From: lori shikuma <shikumalori@gmail.com> on behalf of lori shikuma
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools are NOT ready to open

To Whom It May Concern:

As a part-time teacher, private tutor, and mother of two high school children, I STRONGLY feel that Hawaii schools are NOT ready to open on 8/4. Clear plans from the Dept. of Health, more training for teachers, and clear plans for schools are needed. There is too much at stake to rush the opening.

Thank you,
Lori Shikuma

441 Kupaua Place
Honolulu, HI 96821

Testimony BOE

From: Marlene Reeves <marlene.reeves@gmail.com> on behalf of Marlene Reeves
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello my name is Marlene Reeves I am a special education teacher at Kealakehe elementary school on the big island I have been grade level chair for four years. We have roughly 18 special education teachers. When A sped teacher decides to move back to the mainland guess who gets to do their job and my job each year I have done someone else's job the last four years. First one was the 5th grade sped teacher. I did all of her progress reports for 2 quarters. Next year was a kindergarten teacher and the following year it was one of the first grade teachers left in February so guess who got to do their IEP's snd progress report plus my own. This past school year a preschool teacher left at Christmas and guess who had to do some of the IEP's, progress reports, and choice boards every week for 2 quarters.
Again I only get one paycheck not two. I told my principal if someone leaves this year I am quitting grade level chair and someone else can do these progress reports and IEP's it's so sad I'm just trying to make it here I'm a single mom with a son who has special needs and it's been really hard to live here because of the high cost of living and I'm going to retire next year so find someone else to do two jobs for one paycheck.
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Glenn Mayeda <gmayeda@kawaihonapcs.org> on behalf of Glenn Mayeda
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of the Schools

Aloha,

I have been an educator in the DOE, and now at a Public Charter School for nearly 20 years. I support the answering of Corey Rosenlee‘s questions today from his press conference in that we as educators need more time to develop curriculum, get trained, and need answers from the DOH and BOE before we can open up our campuses to students safely. I am appalled at the push to open all of our campuses with all of these numerous questions still unanswered and the liabilities that are prevalent. Please consider everyone‘s safety first before we have casualties. Even 1 in unacceptable.

--
Mahalo,

Glenn Mayeda Jr.
Counselor
Kawaihona O Ka Na'auao PCS
(808) 620 - 9030 Ext. 323

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Parpart <lparpart@yahoo.com> on behalf of Laura Parpart
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Providing Testimony for : Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to

July 21, 2020

Providing Testimony for : Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

From: Laura Fernando – Special Education Teacher at Mililani Middle School

I have been extremely grateful for my job with the DOE as a special education teacher. This is a second career for me after being a substitute teacher for 13 years and other full time jobs. Being this is a second career, I am an older teacher and am extremely concerned about the safety of not only myself, but other teachers, school employees, and the students. Just last night, I was writing my will because I fear for my own safety at school. With students not wearing masks in school classrooms and the local numbers of covid cases increasing to new heights, this tells me that if the schools reopen on August 4th, 2020, then the schools will not be a safe place for anyone to learn or work. Originally, the DOE said they would not reopen schools until 28 days of no cases and now they are opening schools with record numbers of new cases! This is unwise and I submit testimony to delay the opening of schools. It would be safest to provide students with computers and hot spots, if needed, and to teach classes online until a vaccine is in place, so people can be truly safe while learning and teaching. I seriously hope you will reconsider the DOE reopening date and delay this date to avoid unnecessary illnesses and death for the people of Hawaii.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Laura Fernando

Phone: 808-223-4167

Email: LParpart@yahoo.com

Testimony BOE

From: Henry <wonghenry61@yahoo.com> on behalf of Henry
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**.
My name is Henry Wong and I work at Alvah Scott Elementary as a Special Educations teacher. I have been a SPED teacher for over 12 years and the pay differential for SPED teachers are ten years too late. The experiences that we deal with are challenging to say the least on a daily basis. Qualified SPED teachers are leaving education for the last tens years and even worse is there are no new incoming SPED teachers in sight. This shortage of SPED teacher crisis will not end.
I understand that Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified SPED teachers, which is already a crisis, for our special needs student population.
If Hawaii's SPED teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Our SPED teachers, students, and parents will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who require qualified SPED teachers during these difficult times.
Respectfully,
Henry Wong

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Melody Halzel <mhalzel@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Melody Halzel
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postpone school in person opening until SAFETY is guaranteed

To whom it may concern,

As a public health student and member of the community in Hawaii, I support the request of the HSTA to postpone the in-person learning school environment until all SAFETY measures can be addressed and ensured. There are so many unanswered questions and limited guidance or strategies- which are necessary- to implement in person learning without the risk of spreading COVID-19 to children, parents, teachers, cafeteria workers, health care workers, grandparents and more. The "Visual check" and "bubble" solutions seem to be lacking scientific evidence of being successful to prevent any type of spread.

Furthermore, as a sibling of 5 children, at one point in my life all of us were attending different schools and my youngest brother has a rare genetic disorder that puts him at high risk of health conditions. How could we successfully implement the bubble strategy and keep my brother safe? I am thankful that we are all adults and are not facing this situation as school-aged children and teenagers. I would feel immense guilt knowing sending us to school could cause the spread and death of community members in Hawaii.

Please take the time to thoroughly answer all questions addressed by the HSTA and if impossible, delay the reopening of in person classrooms. By the way, did you not have months to prepare?!?!

Thank you,
Melody Halzel

Testimony BOE

From: Charity Baloran <cbaloran@gmail.com> on behalf of Charity Baloran
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continue to fund teacher shortage differentials

Testimony BOE

From: sung park <psungm7@yahoo.com> on behalf of sung park
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; michael_harano/washint/hidoe@notes.k12.hi.us; Michael.Harano@k12.hi.us
Subject: RE: School reopening

To whom it may concern'

I am deeply concerned with the scheduled reopening of schools. I am a teacher at Washington Middle School (WMS) and I do not think the safety of students, teachers, staff, or relatives has been adequately addressed. I have heard that a preponderance of Covid19 infections on Oahu are among Pacific Islanders and Filipinos, both of which represent a large proportion of our student body. I believe this raises the likelihood of exposure significantly at WMS.

The HSTA has raised a number of concerns with the proposed opening and I agree with them. Contrary to what the DOE has stated there has been little or no training for teachers in online teaching or how to safely implement a hybrid teaching model. The question of what will happen when (not if) a student of teacher does test positive has not been properly addressed. A large percentage of our students lack either the equipment and/or the broadband connectivity required to participate in virtual learning. I am also not aware of how the term "vulnerable students" is being defined, although those are the kids who supposedly will need actual classroom time. These are a few of my concerns. I refer you to testimony by HSTA for a more complete list.

I realize that the task of inventing a new system of teaching is huge and challenging, but I feel that rather than rushing to reopen schools just to have them open we should take the time needed to actually format a safe and practical way to do so. Anything less presents a physical danger to teachers and students and is unlikely to provide the quality teaching/learnng experience we all want for our kids.

Respectfully yours,

Sung Park, WMS math teacher
2017 HI State Teacher of the Year

Testimony BOE

From: Ms Jazz M <msjasminemathew@gmail.com> on behalf of Ms Jazz M
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

After careful examination of my classroom We are not prepared for students to return to the classroom. My biggest class is 12 students. There is not enough space in my classroom to space students out 6 feet apart.
I also taught summer hub and had five students. Of which I found Myself constantly telling them to distance from one another and not touch each other, as well as having yo tell these students to put masks on. It was very difficult.

Our youth are not always mature enough to follow the rules of social as social distancing, washing hands, And keeping a mask on. We are not prepared for the spread of covid - 19.

Jasmine Mathew
Science teacher
Kaiser high school

Testimony BOE

From: Shiho Matsutaka <shiho.matsutaka@wilsonschoolhawaii.org> on behalf of Shiho Matsutaka
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii Department of Education,

This email is regarding on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

I have been teaching Japanese to all Kindergarten to 5th graders (about 575 students) at Wilson Elementary School for the past 12 years. Due to supporting the lower grade level to social distancing this year, my position has been changed to be a Second grade teacher for the first time. I come today sending my testimony to express my frustration of reopening the school too soon without any safe protocols and guidance that are not in place by the BOE currently.

Teachers are expected to come back to school next Wednesday, July 29th and are only given four days of preparation to start school when students are expected to arrive on August 4th. This is not enough time as we are not trained on how to welcome the students safely and four days is not enough as there are so many things to consider this year. I do appreciate the first 9 days for the staff to be trained after students leave campus after lunch, but I believe this is too late and all staff needs to be trained BEFORE students arrive back to campus.

As a new Second grade teacher, I am not ready in my new position to safely welcome my students. I know we will have our training in the first 4 days, however, that is not enough. In case the Covid-19 gets worse, we need to prepare lessons for distance learning and we need more training on this so we can help students get ready.

Our school decided to have K-2 students having face-to-face instructions daily, and I feel it is not safe to welcome my students into my classroom on a daily basis. The students will be participating in five specialty classes in our classroom as the specialty teachers will be teaching in my classroom once every 9 days. I am also team teaching with another Second grade teacher and we are switching our classes on a daily basis to teach different subjects. The kids will be exposed to so many teachers and teachers who will be coming to my classroom either on a daily basis or a rotational schedule will not be working in a safe environment. We could potentially infect each other without realizing.

If someone from my classroom is exposed to Covid-19, it means that it was exposed to other specialty teachers and my team teacher. This would not only make my classroom to be quarantined, but it will make everyone at our school be quarantined because they meet the specialty teachers also who are going to different classrooms on a daily basis. My team teacher most likely got infected too and she would need to have her class quarantined because I was teaching her class also.

It was not right for DOE to announce to parents that they had a 100% option for distance learning. I have not heard anything about this as we were only given three instructional models to choose from. This information is misleading and is not transparent to teachers, students, and parents. More guidance and explanation needs to be given.

I am the HSTA head representative at our school, and when we were given only one week to turn in the agreement for a waiver for 6ft, I felt it was rushed. Not all teachers are back on campus, and I do understand that the administration could have figured the classroom setting for the teachers who are not back on campus, but it is actually the teachers who are in the classroom daily and they should be the ones setting up their classroom when we officially go back to work. These teachers should not be penalized for not coming in during the summer and administration should not feel rushed also until they hear their teachers voice. DOE should approve extensions for schools who need more time to figure out their instructional models and classroom spacing.

I feel it's too soon to start school as we have so many factors we need to take care of. I feel really rushed and not prepared at all at this time without properly knowing how to start school safely. I really don't want to leave this career, and I know many teachers don't. However, I really fear for my family and my health and safety, and I want to work in a safe environment. I highly ask DOE to work together and see the importance of prioritizing safety first for the kids, staff, family, and the community. Please consider accepting the plan to delay the start of school. We need more time to be trained and time to plan how to safely start the school year.

Sincerely,
Shiho Matsutaka

Testimony BOE

From: Cristy Hasha <chasha@voyagerpcs.com> on behalf of Cristy Hasha
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a middle school Special Education teacher at Voyager Public Charter School. I have two children who also attend that school. While my school has already made a lot of progress towards reopening school, there still way too many questions and holes in the system. My main reason for wanting to delay the start of school is because there is no plan regarding what happens if a staff member or student tests positive with covid. What safeguards are we putting in place? Does the entire school shut down? Just the classroom that hosts the infected person? With all the unknowns, it is my opinion that it is irresponsible to open schools at this point.

Mahalo,

Cristy Hasha

Testimony BOE

From: Kehaulani Deboma <deboma@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Kehaulani Deboma
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:05 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,
My name is Kehaulani Deboma
I am a SPED TEACHER @ NHIS
Re: Hard to Staff Pay & SPED Differential

My testimony is that we need these differential pay. SPED students in low poverty area needs consistency & structure. If you take away these differentials teachers will start to leave again and with teacher's always coming & going makes it hard for any student to build relationships with.
With students reading lower than their grade level is a struggle for students and teachers to achieve states testing score goals.. Many teachers in Hawaii struggle just to live here and to take away these differentials could cause another set back for students learning and safe environment.
Teachers are resigning, retiring or contemplating quitting with the whole u certainty of this ongoing pandemic situation and then to take away much needed differentials that teachers use to buy resources for their classrooms and/or students incentives to encourage learning, more and more teachers may consider to leave as well!

Kehaulani Deboma

Testimony BOE

From: Winifred Hui <winifredhui@gmail.com> on behalf of Winifred Hui
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:05 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 109935958_10158963703602150_2175758521915817977_n.jpg

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Wini Hui and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to School (attached) because I am terrified of sending my children back to school right now. I feel like I'm making a choice to risk my children's health and pray that they hopefully don't catch covid when they get back in the classroom especially because our elementary school has selected a full 100% face-to-face model with maximum 25 kids in each room with 3 feet distancing. What is critical is that we live in a multi-generational home. My children's grandparents and even a great grandmother are living in the same household. I understand that children are less likely to have a severe reaction but what if they bring home something to their great grandmother or grandparents? It's a risk. Do they then have to live with knowing that they caused their great grandmother or grandparents to catch covid and possibly pass away? I understand education is important but is it worth risking a life? I can't live with that. Please implement a phased approach. There is no right way because nothing seems right but shouldn't we at least choose a safer way? The phased approach is a safer way. It's the more sensible way. Please think about our keiki and their families.

Wini Hui

Parent

Recommended Phased In Reopening

The movement from one phase to the next will be dependent on monitoring the spread of COVID-19 as well as health and safety guidance.

PHASE 1: FULL REMOTE LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar, will begin school on August 17, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar, will begin school on September 1, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- No students in the school buildings. All instruction will be delivered virtually.

PHASE 2: HYBRID LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
    - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
    - Students learn online outside of school 3 days a week.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
    - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
- Students will rotate between face-to-face and virtual instruction.

PHASE 3: FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING (VIRTUAL OPTION)

- When safe, all students will return to in-person instruction with a virtual option.
- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further health and safety guidance.

Testimony BOE

From: Charity Baloran <cbaloran@gmail.com> on behalf of Charity Baloran
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continue to fund teacher shortage differentials

Three years ago, I willingly made the switch back into the special education department after being in the general education setting for 5 years. My heart, my passion just yearned for that need to want to help those struggling students.
When I began my first year back, I witnessed the joy in the eyes of my students as they accomplished their mini-huge milestones. I call it mini-huge because to others it may appear so simplistic, but to us it was more than that. It was a huge celebration whether the child remembered to sound out each phoneme when reading a word or got 100% on their math test.
A year later, an unexpected bonus was announced, which came as a sweet surprise to finally be acknowledged for our hard work and dedication to our students. With the bonus, I was able to add a little more to our weekly grocery hauls. Earlier this year, my husband took a pay cut due to the pandemic. With the extra money, I am able to take on his share of the bills. Now, to hear that we are going to lose what we've earnestly worked for and continue to work for is just downright heart-wrenching. I just can't wrap around the idea as to why we, as educators, are always the first to get cut when things go wrong, yet the first to be accounted for during an election? Why are we, always having to validate our worth? Quality teachers with big hearts for our children are hard to come by. Is the state of Hawaii willing to lose that?

Testimony BOE

From: Lorena Wong <lorenawong@icloud.com> on behalf of Lorena Wong
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:07 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: URGENT

It does not make sense to force the opening of schools, so soon, while spikes are occurring. Do you realize how many military families come to HI & what they'll bring with them?

I guarantee that as soon as schools open up, numbers of COVID19 will sky rocket causing the state to back slide, shutting down the economy once again, starting from square 1, AGAIN, and for what? Because the state could not be patient.

If anything, open up schools on DIGITALLY so we don't continue to suffer more cases of COVID19. The state can do this, it's in the best interest of every human being. Stop being selfish!!!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Calley Neva <calleyneva@gmail.com> on behalf of Calley Neva
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha. If you would have asked me last week if I thought we should go back to school or not, I would have be adamant about returning to school! I believe our students need quality, in person, instruction.

However, on my volunteered summer break time I went into my classroom to arrange desks for the upcoming year (6 ft distancing). My small classroom could not accommodate the 23 incoming 1st graders. So as a quick fix I was willing to move my classroom into a larger room on campus.

Unfortunately, the larger room will only fit 20 students. And that is without my desk or any extra furniture. Just desks. Only 20. On top of the impossibility of fitting all my students in one room; there is no central point of the room to teach from. No matter where I stand, there will be students blocked who will not get the quality instruction that they deserve.

I feel that returning to the classroom on August 4th is an impossible task. This is NOT going to be better for our children. Not only is it unsafe for our health to return, but the unclear guidelines make it impossible to provide quality teaching that our keiki deserve!

Thank you,
Calley Neva
Jefferson Elementary School—1st grade

Testimony BOE

From: Sheree Gates <mons84@me.com> on behalf of Sheree Gates
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing to testify that I am a DOE employee, specifically, a school counselor at Farrington HS.

I have written my administrator earlier last week to share this same concern. I believe that the business items outlined by HSTA are all of crucial importance to the opening of our schools safely. By safely I mean, not ONE person, student or staff or family member, should be put in Jeopardy of DYING because we are forcing the students to come back too school before all of the outlined safe guards are in place!

I, personally, am in 2 high risk categories: I have a long term lung disease, asthma, which vastly increases my chances of DYING if I contact COVID, And I am over 60. My age also increases my chances of DYING from this disease.
I have requested to work from home due to this increased risk of contacting the disease and dying.

Please delay the opening of school for a month and get these items worked out before you put my life in Jeopardy, and that of each DOE employee and student.

Thank you,
Sheree Gates

Sent from Sheree's iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Tracie K <hblfstyles@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tracie K
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Testimony on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

To Whom It May concern:

I am an educator in the Central district, I teach Hawaiian language. My child will be attending Kamalani Academy public charter school. I am writing to express my deep concern for the reopening of schools. I have been watching the news and seeing the recommendations for students to return to school because they are at a lower risk to contract the Covid-19 virus.

This is of great concern because even though they are at lower risk, educators are not. Many of my colleagues are older and close to retirement age and you are putting us as well as our own ‘ohana at great risk because we will be in contact with our students and have the possiblility to infect our own loved ones.

Please reconsider this decision and allow us to wait until there is a vaccine for this virus before we resume teaching in person.

Mahalo for your attention,

TK Muraki

Testimony BOE

From: Skye Espino <bleauleelou@gmail.com> on behalf of Skye Espino
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening schools

To whom it may concern,

I am a teacher, mother and wife in Hawaii and I feel it is too soon to open schools.
As a mother I am terrified of my children getting sick from other kids at school as my kids are in preschool, first, and second grade and keeping their mask on is very difficult. My oldest has asthma making her a higher risk. Although I have been working with them on sanitation they will not remember to wash their hands after any contact with something someone else has touched.
As a wife, I am afraid of bringing home this virus to my ohana because my husband has asthma and COPD too along with multiple times in the ER with pneumonia making him a higher risk.
As a teacher I have been told there is no accommodation available because I am not directly providing care for a "sick" spouse or child and I am being forced to either go to work or quit my job in order to stay home and keep my family healthy and homeschool my kids. Therefore I am forced to send my kids to school because I do not have available childcare or a reliable person to do distant learning with them. I feel my kids are going to fall behind because on the days they will be required to do distant learning I am not able to be home to teach them.
Thank you for your time reading my submission and I pray that we put our keiki and community first. I agree with my doctor that we should not open schools until there is a vaccine available.

Mahalo,
Skye Espino

Testimony BOE

From: Tori Russ <russvs199@gmail.com> on behalf of Tori Russ
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testifying: H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding

H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 Response) 2017-2021 Contractual modifications and conditions of work related COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.
To Whom It may Concern,

My name is Victoria Russ, I am a teacher at Lanakila Elementary School. I am writing this testimony with no surprise. It has been made clear by the government and our systems/ institutions that Public Education is not respected or valued. Year after year we propose budget cuts to our schools (EVEN THIS YEAR) and NOW we are asking schools to operate as normal throughout a global pandemic which is quite contradicting.

It is an insult to teachers across America to be thrown into a situation that is clearly uncharted, but what's most alarming is the lack of information on the BOE & DOE's part. You are participating in sending thousands of workers and kids back to school and cannot answer simple questions such as; What will happen if a kid or teacher is positive for covid-19? What happens if an entire classroom tests positive? If a student cannot attend school whose job is it to provide at home learning?

These are simple questions that should have answers. These are not hypothetical questions so much as things that will need to be addressed as they happen in real time. This is a socioeconomic issue as we can see from data throughout the world. Those in upper class families and wealth do not face the same struggles as those who are economically disadvantaged. The decisions to move forward without promised plans or answers suggest a serious disconnect of understanding what many of our families face living here in Hawai'i. Decisions should not be made based on the small percentage of the population that has a stable home. Decisions need to be based accordingly on the needs of its people, and in this case the needs of the people in the State of Hawaii are being ignored. But at what cost? and what for? What is the gain on the DOE or BOEs part in rushing to open? Aren't there more risks than not?

Without having proper protocols in place how can you ask the teachers to trust these decisions? We face continual disrespect and are needed as society's babysitters. Soon things will no longer be able to operate in this way as the system is already crashing.

Parents, teachers and children are all human beings who deserve to be valued at their core instead of seen as "human stock". Moving forward with empty answers and the idea that "eventually we will get sick" is a disgrace on the DOE and BOE's part.

As history continues to repeat itself, I ask some members of the board to use compassion and educated reasoning when deciding to move forward without a proper plan in place. In the news we hear a lot of great "plans" with zero factual evidence to support claims coming out. (distance learning training was not provided for all teachers, there is no formal distance learning curriculum provided by the DOE, there is no set plan for a second lockdown when the state has to close due to early opening of the "economy") eventually truth will expose itself, and it will be at the cost of the working class.

The United States had months to come up with a formal education plan for the following school year, as we see COVID-19. It has been around since 2019, and it's clear that states sat on this information instead of choosing to

act. Now it falls on the shoulders of teachers, principals and parents to help our "economy" function. When will people stand up for what is morally just? When will we start to do the right thing in the system of Public Education? When will make decisions in the best interest for the ***students?*** instead of the economy?
Sincerely,
A tired teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Robert Hu <hu4242001@yahoo.com> on behalf of Robert Hu
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School reopening

D.O.E.,

Why is it prisoners get released from prison to protect them from Covid and we send kids to school with the ppossibility of either being carriers or spreaders? I am at the senior age and have diabetes and I am at high or moderate risk for contracting this. Everyone knows that school is a place where transmission occurs the most frequently due to the kids being in school in close contact with so many people; and that not all kids have learned proper skills in hygiene. Just because kids facing forward doesn't mean that the chance of spread is less likely to occur. I would LOVE for you all to enjoy coming into the classrooms every day for 5-6 hours and sit in rooms that are between 90 -100 degrees with face coverings or shields on. Put yourselves in our place under these conditions that you are proposing for us all. I guess if something did occur, people will be targets for liability and it'll rest upon all of you.

Sincerely,

Robert Hu

Testimony BOE

From: Elissa Gathman <el.gathman@gmail.com> on behalf of Elissa Gathman
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony in support of opening schools on time

Aloha,

My name is Elissa Fiedler. I am a mom as well as a Kindergarten teacher at Kahakai Elementary. I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees**.

I am writing to ask that you continue with your plan to re-open schools on time. Schools, including my own, have been working tirelessly to find ways to create hybrid plans where students can safely learn both in person at school in addition to online. So many young students - especially those who are less privileged - have already suffered so much loss of learning as a result of distance learning. Although I understand it may work for some Kinders, it does NOT work for many others. Kindergarten learning requires a LOT of hands on work. Students need to learn things like how to hold a pencil. They don't even know how to copy letters or words from the board. Teachers need to be able to point to words in a book they are reading, point to each letter to help them sound it out. These are just a few examples. So many parents will need to work and will not be able to give young students the type of support they will need. I can see distance learning working ok in higher grades, but not in early el. Additionally, many students need the social emotional support of an in person class. For some students, school is the place where they feel safe. Students cannot learn if they do not feel safe.

Please keep the plan to re-open schools safely and on time, in place, at least for early El!

Best wishes during this time of tough decision making,
Elissa

Testimony BOE

From: Andrew Sanchez <andrewsanchez54@gmail.com> on behalf of Andrew Sanchez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

> To whom it may concern,

> In my tenure as a public servant, I have never seen such a lack of preparedness when dealing with an issue, as I have seen HIDOE prepare for the reopening of schools during the current pandemic. We have principals who are not adhering to our MOU, who are berating staff, and who are refusing to hear our voices! The current opening models are nowhere sufficient in protecting the health of our keiki and staff. My former district began planning last April. I see how ill-prepared we are and it is blatantly obvious there has been zero planning! Why? This lack of planning is being balanced on the backs of teachers and that is shameful. Respect our lives! Respect our voices! Do not open schools, we are not safe.
>
> Respectfully submitted,
> Andrew Sancez
>
> Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: johnrvp <johnrvp@gmail.com> on behalf of johnrvp
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher concerned to open

I work in a high school and it is particularly disturbing that it appears that no one is really coming up with a comprehensive plan since I have been working summer school in the high school. This summer we were given some cleaning supplies that ran out and were not replaced and when we asked for more cleaning supplies for our rooms it didn't happen. We were also not given masks and it seems that the DOE is lacking some common sense things like having hand sanitizer dispensers all over the school so that the students can use them, not a single bottle of sanitizer for each teacher but rather dispensers throughout the school as well as wipes to wipe the computers and desks down before and after each use, blue tape to make arrows on the ground, Desk dividers with plexiglass all of which seemed very common sense and very simple but not done or directed by DOE. I question why these were not available during the height of the pandemic over the summer and so I suppose they may become available magically in a week but as a special education teacher the room that I'm going to work in is self-contained where students are going to be in the room with me which really places me at greater risk.
Furthermore when I asked if my students would be going out for electives from my self-contained room thus leaving the little bubble of me teaching a group of students in a self-contained room I was told that the high school is planning on that continuing so I will have students throughout my day leaving my room going to different rooms on campus interacting with other students on campus randomly based on which electives they're taken and then kept bringing it back bringing the virus back to my room hasn't anybody thought as to whether students should be taking electives outside of their learning circle or bubble, is anyone planning ahead?
The budget shortfall makes me wonder if they would consider taking the stipend away from the special education teachers that we are able to receive a little bit more money last year in exchange for the additional work on afterschool IEPs but that might even be taken away it seems that the special education teachers that are going to have full attendance from their moderate-to-severe students in school would receive Hazard pay beyond that it also makes sense that in the schools that are going to be having students where the teachers should potentially have Hazard pay that that all of the correct cleaning supplies would be available that Hazard pay would be in place, the student desk dividers would be in place the training on how to use WebEx or Google hangout or Google meet would be complete and that these things would be taken care of.
But for example if a teacher gets sick from covid, are they to use all of their sick days during their two-week quarantine or has doe made an allotment for teachers that might have the sniffles and not want to spread that.
I've listed several concerns ranging from not having the proper cleaning supplies to start with or replenishing them two teachers having to work with students that are being sent out to a random electives throughout the campus and coming home to teachers special education teachers potentially losing or not having Hazard pay for being put in hazardous positions to the fact the teachers May in fact need to have additional sick days for a covid-19 situation have any of these things been thoroughly planned out and thought about or we just going to wait and see?
Thank you
John Van Plantinga

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Jocelyn Pajimula <jocelyn.olegario@gmail.com> on behalf of Jocelyn Pajimula
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Testimony - Delay Reopening of Our Schools

Hi,

I am testifying on Action Item *H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.*

My name is Jocelyn Pajimula and I am a middle school teacher in Ewa Beach, HI. I urge the BOE to delay the reopening of Hawaii's schools until a later date after August 4, 2020. As a teacher, I do not feel safe, adequately trained, or prepared to take on the many and difficult tasks being asked of me this school year.

I am not prepared to teach in-person and distance learning simultaneously at a level that would be on par with quality best-teaching practices. I have not been formally trained at all in the skills needed to accurately recognize COVID-19 symptoms in my students. I don't feel satisfactorily informed about the procedures in place, if any, regarding what will happen if new cases of COVID-19 are found at my school.

Yes, there are four teacher work days before students arrive on campus that could be used to train me and other teachers on the things I previously mentioned, but it is just honestly not enough time.

Do you know how long it takes to put up posters on the walls of my classroom? Do you know how long it takes to label all materials with my student's names? Do you know how long it takes to restack and organize resources like textbooks? Do you know how long it takes to print and staple over 100 packets for the first day of school? These are ALSO tasks I have to do in addition to getting trained all before students arrive.

This will not be a normal back-to-school four days. We need more time. Once again, I urge the BOE to delay the reopening of Hawaii's schools until a later date after August 4, 2020.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jocelyn Pajimula
Middle School Teacher
Ewa Beach, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Justin Bergonio <justin.bergonio@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Justin Bergonio
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:05 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/23/2020 BOE Meeting

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Justin R Bergonio, math teacher at Waipahu High School advocating for the push-back of the DOE start date of August 4th and possible implementation of a safe phased opening in bringing students back to school.

I have taught math for five years, and if it's one thing I am confident in is numbers. For example, at this point in time I can easily look at the Department of Health's COVID-19 page, and can see the current case count for today is 25 new cases. I can easily see that our seven-day rolling average of percent positive (number of daily positive coronavirus tests to total number of tests) is about 1.0%. These are comforting to me. This feels like we have things under control.

However, when I see numbers like August 4th start date for teachers, it is the hidden numbers and variables that I don't see the concerns me. Here are some of the hidden variables we have yet to take into account and/or address:

- How many of our returning teachers are in the at-risk category (immuno-comprimised, 65 years+, etc.)?

- How many public school students live in multi-generational households? What is their risk in spreading the virus?

- How many schools have secured the necessary personal protective equipment to ensure school safety? How many have been properly trained?

- How many students would need to be infected before a school is forced to shut down? What are the procedures to do this efficiently and safely?

- How many people are we willing to put at-risk to "see if it is safe" for schools to open?

There is a thing in insurance called a risk assessment in which insurers evaluate and assess risks associated with an insurance policy. What is that number for the DOE? How many people are we willing to put at risk? To see in the hospitals? To put on a ventilator? How many people are allowed to die before we deem it unsafe?

Until there are valid numbers, we should be cautious in how we carry out this re-opening. All eyes are upon us, and if we do this wrong, there's really no going back.

Sincerely,
Justin R Bergonio

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Testimony BOE

From: m satta.ellis <msattaellis@gmail.com> on behalf of m satta.ellis
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:06 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re-opening of schools

Many of us have some very serious reservations about returning. It feels like we will be "fending for ourselves" as the adults in the school setting (without clear and concise commitment and communication to maintain the emotional and physical well-being and safety of every member of our campus 'ohana). There is no insurance of the fact that every campus is implementing every possible measure to ensure a healthy and safe environment as laid out by the CDC. **We are educators, we know how important the process of socialization is**. We want to be back, we miss our students, however, we do not feel safe for ourselves and our students and ohana.

I brought up this concern during our talk-story session with our principal last week, and the response was that we are always at-risk. Yes, we are always at-risk contracting COVID in the public, however, **in the high school setting, many of us are questioning the increase in exposures to multiple "bubbles"** as referred to by Dr. Park (as students will be switching classes). **We are also exposed to these new and multiple bubbles for longer periods of time, block periods of 90 minutes or so**. I don't spend 90 minutes in stores, not even at Target, I promise. Exposure is also coupled with no guarantee of cleaning and disinfecting in between classes or all other possible methods such as sneeze guards and ventilation systems to increase outside air. **As a 20+ year veteran teacher, I don't feel safe sharing my views. Not only because I feel belittled, my feedback becomes ineffectual**. I am hoping by providing testimony I can share our perspective.

My personal story:

My oldest lives in Brooklyn, works for an advertising firm, he will be working from his home in Brooklyn until the end of the year, the firm mandated it. My next two are 18, staying home from University of Hawaii Manoa switched their classes to online and are sad they won't be on campus, my son misses his friends and hula brothers and my hānai daughter will miss her transfer and first opportunity to experience university life. But we will have peace of mind they will be safe. My other son is our incoming sophomore at the school I teach, and missed his first HS track season posting collegiate numbers in his jumps. He has been training non-stop and wants to go back to school but has a lot of questions: can I hang out with my friends? How do we eat? (since eating is communal in our culture) Is there gonna be football? Where do I put my football and workout stuff? He is taking early college classes and AP, the choice is posing to be difficult. We have yet to decide his return to campus.
Our youngest was a boarding student at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama. They have closed boarding and opened only to seniors. He will continue via Distance Learning (they have thoroughly invested in the technology and training of their teachers) and there are plans in place for a learning center to open up for boarding students on this side of the island to connect. My husband works for an airline so that has been difficult, but at least he has been home and enforcing our schedules and activities. I share this because all of my family members' lives have shifted due to the pandemic and **here I am having to go to work, "practicing safe distancing measures" as if there is NOT a real threat**. All of my kids are concerned about why I have to go to work and come back home to put them in danger all the while they are away from their schools. It is confusing and scary for all of us, especially since I have asthma. I submitted the necessary forms to ask for the insurance of cleaning and disinfecting in between classes and items to increase ventilation in my classroom and the response from Civil Rights Compliance Branch is, "These needs appear to be dealt with in the Department's opening of school guidelines under COVID-19".

If schools open without considering our reservations and implement every possible measure to ensure a healthy and safe environment as laid out by the CDC, like my thousands of other colleagues, as teachers, we will choose to serve over our own personal safety and report to work. I will have to then implement a protocol of my return home of stripping

down and bathing outside before returning, and cleaning and sanitizing my vehicle and clothes daily just as a health care worker on the front lines does to protect their families. I also need to start writing my living will and will because the fact that I am at higher risk for complications for COVID-19. Why? Because we are not ready. It is not safe.

Molly M. Satta-Ellis

Social Studies Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Beth Pasternak <bpasternak10@gmail.com> on behalf of Beth Pasternak
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: PLEASE RECONSIDER OPENING SCHOOLS

Aloha,

I am writing in regards to the opening of school. I have been an educator for 12 years and I have never felt more undervalued, underappreciated, and unprepared. There is no solid plan for schools, instead Dr. Kishimoto keeps saying it is up to the principals at each school. The principals then tell the teachers, "I want to empower you and it's up to the teachers." This is NOT ACCEPTABLE! As teachers we thrive on structure and direction. We would never be successful teachers if we handled our classroom the way school reopening in being handled.

As a teacher I do not feel safe enough to return to school with the rise of cases. There are **too many** questions that are unanswered at this time.
What is the criteria from the DOH for schools to open/close?
How many confirmed community cases do there need to be to shut down again? If a student in your class becomes infected, do all students in the class need to be tested? Now, all these kids need to be quarantined and well as the teacher.
Who is going to now teach the class for the 2 weeks? Or what is going to happen to my sick time?
Who is going to pay for the testing?

I have been a high school math special education teacher at Lahainaluna for 6 years. In those 6 years we have never been fully staffed. We also have had times where our custodians are not available and classrooms and bathrooms are not always cleaned every day. This is something that is of MAJOR concern. Also our school nurse is often times out sick herself. How are you going to ensure that this is going to happen if it has not consistently in the past? Instead, Dr. Kishimoto says schools will be able to but with no solid plan.

Also entering the school year virtually with no training cannot lead to success. As teachers we have stated from March when we went online that we need support. We have not had ANY training and feel completely lost.

Please reconsider pushing back the opening of our schools until all our IMPORTANT questions have answers and teachers are made aware of how to successfully and safely return to school. More time is needed to work out all the logistics. After watching the legislative session on Thursday, I agree with senator Fevella and think teachers should use the month of August to get prepared and trained for online learning and have students start school with the rest of the country September 4th.

Thank you for your time.

Beth Pasternak
570-575-9386

Testimony BOE

From: Larry Hill <larryhill888@yahoo.com> on behalf of Larry Hill
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

I have been on the frontlines at school daily working and although I see firsthand how hard our custodians and admin are working I do not feel schools are ready to reopen come August 4th. There have been to many changes even daily and questions that go unanswered in order to safely say we are ready. I would not feel safe

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Testimony BOE

From: jennifer lum <jenniferrolum@gmail.com> on behalf of jennifer lum
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Jen Lum and I am a 16 year veteran of the DOE. I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because even though I took the time to plan and prepare the best I can, we are not ready for face to face teaching on August 4th. I am excited to get back to teaching. But, I am not dying to get back to physically teaching face to face. We are asking for a delay to starting for training and transition to online teaching. And we are asking for a 3 tiered phasing in to return to full class teaching.

Recommended Phased In Reopening

The movement from one phase to the next will be dependent on monitoring the sp
COVID-19 as well as health and safety guidance.

PHASE 1: FULL REMOTE LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar, will begin school o
  2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health a
  guidance.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar, will begin sch
  September 1, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending fu
  and safety guidance.
- No students in the school buildings. All instruction will be delivered virtuall

PHASE 2: HYBRID LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar will begin face-to-fa
  pending further health and safety guidance.
  - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days p
    virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
  - Students learn online outside of school 3 days a week.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar will begin face
  instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
  - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days p
    virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
- Students will rotate between face-to-face and virtual instruction.

PHASE 3: FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING (VIRTUAL OPTION)

- When safe, all students will return to in-person instruction with a virtual op
- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further heal
  guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,
Jen Lum
Teacher
Pearl City High School

Testimony BOE

From: Sherry Robello <sherryrobello@gmail.com> on behalf of Sherry Robello
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Sherry Robello and I teach second grade at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School. I am asking the Board of Education and the state of Hawaii to please delay the opening of school buildings to students. HIDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online environment. Teachers have not received any training throughout the summer on distance learning implementation and when I return to school on July 29, my school will only provide 6 hours of distance learning training. Students will start a blended in-person and online learning schedule on August 4. Teachers need more training to properly prepare for 100% distance learning and blended distance learning.

Please do not rush the opening of schools. The daily number of current COVID-19 cases are the same as when school closed in March and tourism will reopen in September. Personally, I am worried about working in close contact with dozens of children and adults for multiple hours in a small classroom. I am still confused and have many questions about how HIDOE and DOH will implement the necessary measures and steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19. Why are we not taking temperatures for all employees and students daily? What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools?

For the record, I am high risk and I also live with family members who are high risk. Even though the risk for keiki is low for serious disease, I and many other teachers are putting their lives at risk, due to our age and medical conditions. Please consider everyone's health and safety before reopening schools.

Mahalo for your time,
Sherry Robello